SIGHT & SOUND

WINTER 1937-38 VOL 6 NO 24 PRICE SIXPENCE

ARTICLES

Film News and Reviews
Light-Hearted Vikings
Actuality in Education
La Marseillaise
War
Memorable and Not So Memorable
Ex Libris
Cinema Pests
Honourable Movie-Makers
Autocracy v. Democracy
Movie Parade, 1937
What They Are Doing
Development of Television
Classroom Projection

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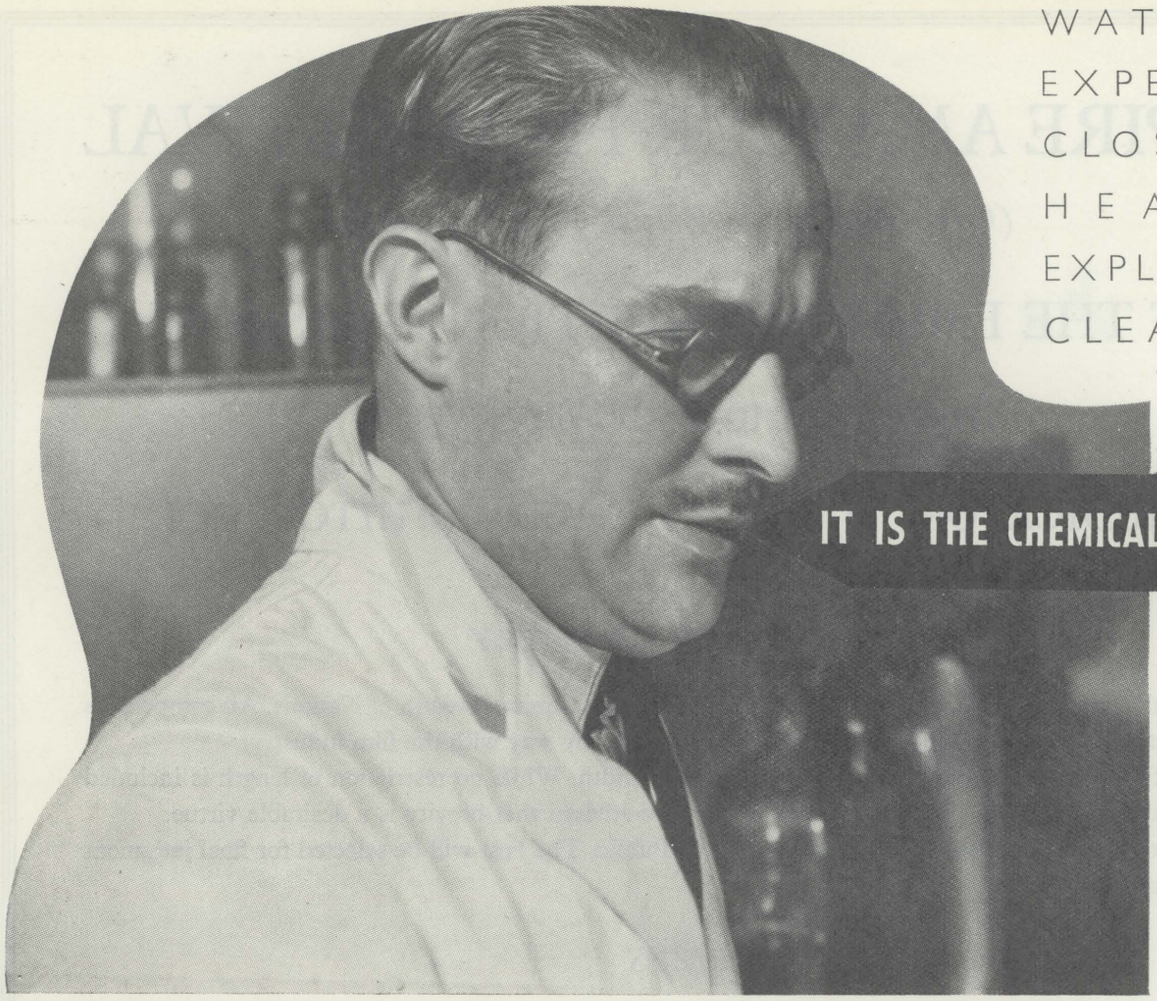

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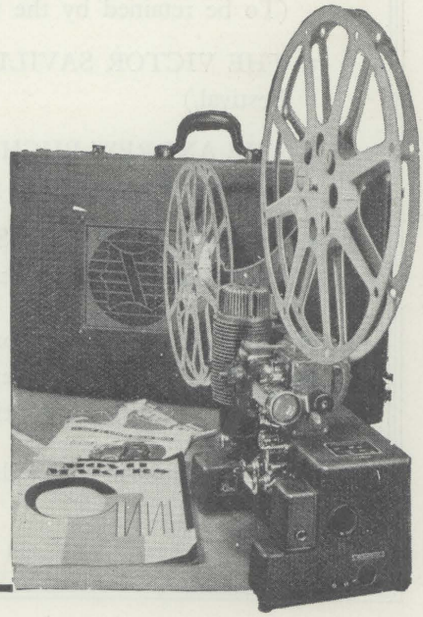

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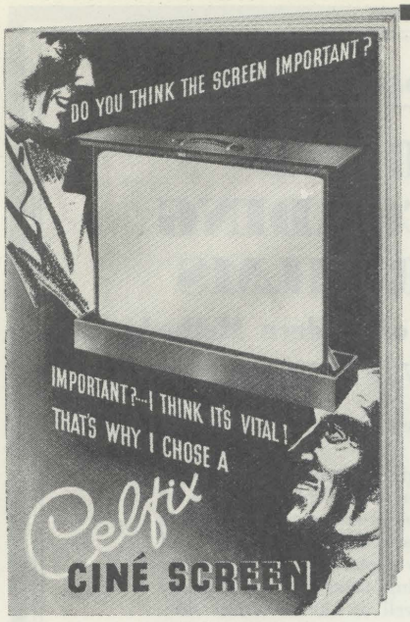

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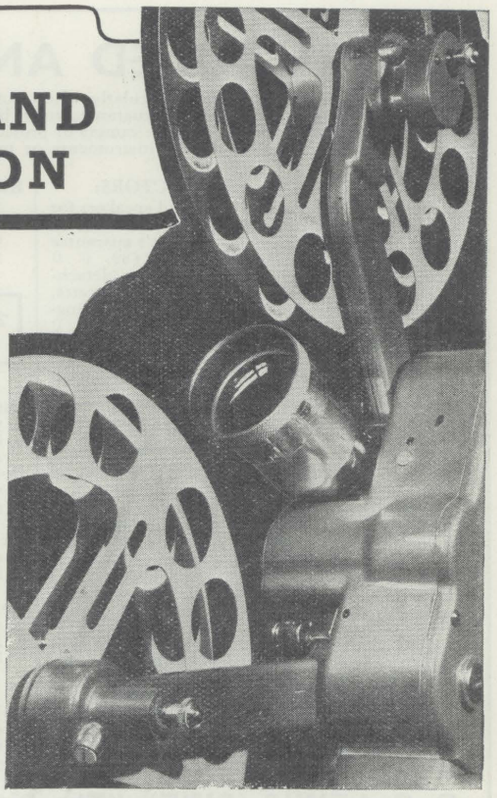

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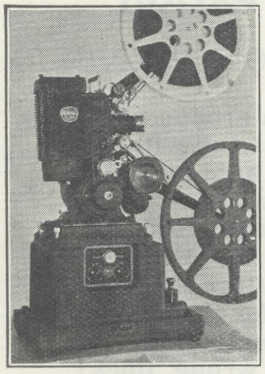

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TO READERS

The utmost latitude is given to contributors to SIGHT AND SOUND and, therefore, the opinions expressed in signed articles are not necessarily in agreement with those of the British Film Institute.

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NOTES OF THE QUARTER

RELIGIOUS FILMS

A steadily growing controversy over the showing of religious films in churches has been one of the features of the quarter. Within a week of each other no less than four such films—*Triumph*, produced by World Commonwealth Films, and *As We Forgive*, *The Sower* and *Where Love is, God is*, produced by the Gaumont-British Instructional for, and in collaboration with, the Religious Film Society—were shown privately for the first time. All these were made sincerely by sincere people, and of their merits or faults we have no wish to write here. The showing of some of these pictures in certain churches, and of other films not primarily intended to convey a religious message, is, however, causing considerable heartburnings. On the one hand it is argued that the film is merely a form of bribery to entice people into church and has no place with true worship, on the other that it is a true successor to the old miracle plays and that a sincere and noble picture has as deep a religious value as a great fresco or an anthem. The experiment of showing two religious films in Chichester Cathedral on Sunday, January 9th, certainly drew a very large congregation.

Meanwhile a point to be noted is that the showing of such films on Sundays appears to weaken the case of those who oppose the Sunday opening of cinemas. That, at any rate, is the opinion of Wardour Street, and it is likely shortly to be put forward with some force.

FILMS BILL

Time marches on, but the Films Bill is still under discussion. On December 21st, when the Standing Committee of the House of Commons, which is considering the Bill, adjourned until February 3rd, clause 25—which is more than halfway through the Bill—was still being dealt with.

Mr. Oliver Stanley, President of the Board of Trade, said at the meeting that there would be only three more meetings of the Committee available if the Bill was to reach the House of Lords in time to become law before the existing Act expired. He hoped, however, that the Committee would be able to work to a timetable over the remaining clauses, new clauses and schedules in time for that to be done.

Clause 25 deals with the determination of films to be treated as British films for the purposes of registration.

The Standing Committee to consider the Cinematograph Bill consists of forty members of the House of Commons including Sir Adrian Baillie, Mr. Beverley Baxter, Sir Alfred Beit, Sir Ernest Graham-Little, Mr. Harold Nicolson, Major R. H. Rayner, Mr. R. W. Sorensen, Mr. George R. Strauss and Miss Ellen Wilkinson.

The Committee first met to consider the forty-four clauses in the Bill on November 18th, and was confronted with no less than seventeen pages of amendments, which were added to almost daily.

On December 21st it adjourned until February 3rd, by which time it had considered twenty-five clauses. Principal events in the Committee were as follows:

A new clause, setting up a Films Council—proposed by Mr. Oliver Stanley—was passed after much discussion. The function of the Council will be to review conditions in the industry and advise the Government when asked to do so. An amendment that a Film commission, consisting of five members, should be substituted for the Council was rejected.

Sir Adrian Baillie's "separate quota" amendment was defeated on December 14th after three days of argument and after it had received, to quote Mr. Oliver Stanley, "an amount of propaganda greater than any amendment in my experience".

It is expected that the remaining clauses in the Bill will take only three more days to consider.

A DOCUMENTARY TRIUMPH

The great value of the English documentary film has apparently been realised in America. As a result of the visit of Mr. Paul Rotha, announced in the last issue of SIGHT AND SOUND, the New York Museum of Modern Art has acquired thirteen English documentaries produced during the past three years. These will be circulated throughout the United States as examples of this new method of film technique.

Their acquisition is an admission that, thanks to the work of such organisations as the Post Office Film Unit, Strand Films, the Film Centre and others, Britain definitely leads the way in this branch of industry at least.

WALT DISNEY

The borders of Fairyland are expanding continuously. To the roll of honour of those gentlemen who have delighted the hearts of children with their tales the gnomes have added another name—that of a Hollywood American, Walt Disney. They have hailed his first full-length colour film, *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, in America as if it was something new in history, and it is possible that for once they are right. Mickey Mouse and Donald Duck, Pluto and Clara Cluck, are already real, living beings to hundreds of thousands of people throughout the world; now, to that quaint fantastic land in which they move, beauty is being added and poetry and a sense of wonder. Here, surely, is something incalculable—perhaps as important as the first poem or the first painting scrawled roughly in the corners of a cave. At the time of writing England has not had an opportunity of judging the film, but certainly no production has ever been more eagerly awaited.

EMPIRE AND NATIONAL TRUST FILM COMPETITIONS

Details of an Empire Film Festival, organised by the British Film Institute in conjunction with the Scottish Film Council, are announced on another page.

The National Trust has also organised an interesting competition for amateur film makers. Competitors are required to make 16mm. films running not less than ten minutes of one or more of the Trust's properties, and colour films are eligible. The first prize is £20, and the prize-winning films will be used in connection with lectures, etc., to further the objects of the Trust. Closing date is October 1st, 1938, and full details may be obtained from the Competition Secretary, 7 Buckingham Palace Gardens, London, S.W.1.

SAFETY FIRST

An interesting experiment in film making, which has not received the publicity it deserved, has been completed by the Salford Cine Company for the Salford City Police. A "safety first" film for schools, it owes its being to Superintendent L. Milner who, realising the potential value of such a film, got in touch with the Society's chairman. A 16mm. silent film, 550 feet long, it was produced with the full co-operation of the local police and is already being shown to schoolchildren. It is a pity that more local authorities do not realise how much useful work could be done by amateur film makers in their neighbourhoods if they were given the opportunity.

PANAY

It is doubtful if the true value of the film as an historical record has yet been fully realised. During the past year the newsreels have recorded, among other events, the Coronation of King George VI, the horrors of the wars in China and Spain and, last but not least, the bombing of the Panay. As the printed word is stored for posterity in the archives of the world, so these lengths of celluloid are being preserved in the vaults of the National Film Library and elsewhere. One can imagine the interest of future historians as the strange, archaic twentieth-century civilisation, carefully decanted from its tins, is unreeled before them. What we would not give in this present age for a newsreel, however faded and flickering, of the Coronation of William the Conqueror or the Battle of Waterloo?

CINEMATOGRAPH FUND

Answering a question in the House of Commons on December 15th, the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, Earl Winterton, said that the payments which had been authorised by the Privy Council out of the Cinematograph Fund amounted to £26,157 5*s*. 6*d*. of which £307 5*s*. 6*d*. represented administrative expenses. The last payment to the British Film Institute, being the balance of the grant for 1937, was made on November 26th and amounted to £850. The balance remaining in the Fund amounted to £15,756 19*s*. 3*d*.

TAKE CARE

The Empire and G.P.O. Film Libraries announce that, in view of the loss to the authorities and the disappointment to other borrowers which has been caused by many films being returned in a badly damaged condition, borrowers will in future have to pay for any damage to the films caused while in their charge. Once more the need for courses for amateur projectionists is brought to the fore. More and more schools, admirably enough, are realising the value of the film in education, but unfortunately many people consider that a modern projector is a machine which can be handled without care. Considering what amazing works of precision they are, their ease in handling is beyond praise, but nevertheless careless threading can completely ruin a film in one showing.

The values of such courses, therefore, as those which are being held this summer by the Educational Handcraft's Association and by Loughborough College, cannot be over-emphasised.

EVENING FILM SCHOOL

In connection with the above an evening Film School is now being held by the London School's Film Society, and the course is specially planned to provide teachers with opportunities to become acquainted with modern sub-standard apparatus. The syllabus includes principles and practice of projection in the classroom, the arrangement of film lessons, the cinema in relation to extra curriculum activities of the school and the making of simple classroom films. Classes are held on alternate Fridays at the Institute of Education, Southampton Row, London, W.C.1. Fuller details may be obtained from Mr. F. E. Farley, 50 Ashridge Crescent, S.E.18.

NATIONAL FILM LIBRARY

Some interesting old films have been reduced to 16mm. size and are now available to members of the British Film Institute from the Loan Section of the National Film Library. They are: *Lady of the Camellias*, with Sarah Bernhardt; *The Stage Coach Driver and the Girl*, an early Tom Mix; a selection of early trick films; and *The Life of Charles Peace*, one of the first British story films.

Amongst over twenty films acquired by the Loan Section of the Library during the past quarter are such valuable pictures as *To-day and To-morrow*, an instructional film dealing with the work of the National Council of Social Service, which includes a talk by H.R.H. the Duke of Kent, and an intriguing sound film dealing with education in Japanese schools.

HUNGARY POINTS THE WAY

Hungary, that country of vast plains with its gay capital on the Danube, must be regarded as one of the pioneers of the educational film. As long ago as 1913 the City of Budapest established a film studio for the making of films mainly for elementary education. This early initiative was put to an end by the outbreak of the Great War, but—according to the official "Report concerning the Present Situation of Film Education in Hungary, 1937"—a new policy is now being carried out with marked success. A state system of film education has been established which is compulsory for the Governmental and non-Governmental schools subject to the direction of the Ministry of Education, and voluntary for the confessional schools. An Educational Film Department has been set up by the Ministry with a special educational committee to advise it, while educational films must receive the approval of the Committee of the Educational Film Censor before they can be shown in schools.

Already over 60 per cent of all secondary schools and nearly 100 per cent of the Governmental and non-Governmental schools have been furnished with 16mm. projectors. The second necessity—the supply of suitable films—has also been vigorously attacked. The State Library is reported to have 140 films for the current school year, 1937-8, and to have possessed in 1936-7 no fewer than 1,728 copies of the 102 films then in its collection. An average of 50-60 films a day is said to have been issued to the schools. The Library is also responsible for the maintenance and repair of the films.

Clearly, much remains to be done. Elementary education has hardly been touched; the supply of films is inadequate; the method of distribution is, perhaps, open to improvement, while the confessional schools still remain very largely outside the scheme. Nevertheless, when full allowance has been made for the imperfections, the achievement remains an admirable example of what a country with very limited resources can do when the general principle has been accepted.

CANADA ALSO

The Canadian Bureau of Statistics has also issued a report on "The Use of Films and Slides in Canadian Schools" which makes interesting, although less encouraging, reading. Schools in the Dominion, apparently, own about 260 projectors, while a further 100, owned mainly by the teachers, are also used. The total of films owned by the schools and teachers, including Departments of Education, amounts to about 1,000 reels. More than two-thirds of the projectors are 16mm. silent machines, and most of the others 35mm. silent. There are only 32 sound projectors.

As the preface to the report states sadly: "Fewer than 200 projectors in the schools of Canadian cities are to be compared with more than 10,000 in the city schools of the United States. Allowing for the population differences they are about four times as numerous in the United States as here, and in France seven or eight times as numerous."

According to the Report, the most common reasons given by the school authorities for not using motion pictures are as follows: (1) Lack of money to spend; (2) Lack of information as to where desirable films can be obtained; (3) Teachers are insufficiently trained as to the use of projectors; (4) Available films are not suited to the course of study; (5) The lack of electric power.

Here, definitely, is food for thought.

SOUTH AMERICA

British films have so far failed successfully to penetrate into the Argentine, one of the most flourishing and influential of the South American republics, according to a Report issued by the Department of Overseas Trade in November. Of a total of 514 films released in the country in 1936, 358 were produced in the U.S.A. and only 25 in Great Britain. Of these 25, two alone were successful commercially.

This failure is ascribed to the fact that the themes of United Kingdom films are still too heavy and the developments too slow and sober for the South American temperament. A good opportunity still exists, however, for the entry of British films on a larger scale into Argentina provided that local conditions are better catered for.

TASMANIA

The Education Department for Tasmania has decided to promote the use of films in its schools and has appointed a Visual Education Committee to carry out the preliminary work necessary to inaugurating a visual education service as from the beginning of 1938. The Department has decided to subsidise the purchase of 16mm. silent projectors to the extent of one-third of the cost and it intends, after examination, to recommend certain projectors. The Department is particularly anxious to obtain access to a supply of English 16mm. silent educational films.

FILMS FOR ALL

THE WESTERN world has passed the stage when the film was entertainment and nothing more. We are using it for educational and cultural purposes, for research into such complicated scientific problems as air flow or cell growth, and we are learning to recognise it as an art. It is, in short, no longer the seven days wonder of the early days of the century. It has passed into the same category as the electric telegraph, the telephone, the radio, the aeroplane or the motor-car. Film appreciation is therefore beginning to play a part in box-office receipts and it is impossible to exploit the cinema simply because the picture moves.

In countries where the industry has not developed to the same degree as it has in North America or Europe, however, clever business men have found that audiences are prepared to pay to see this new raree show, no matter what is put upon the screen. The pictures are watched with the eye of faith, for their unsophisticated audiences still have to learn that the camera is not infallible but is capable of playing wanton tricks and can, moreover, be used to supply wares as meretricious as any other mass production machinery.

Such a situtation is not without its dangers. According to a recent American computation 220,000,000 people a week throughout the world pay to be entertained in the cinema. This figure shows an increase of 20 millions on the previous year. The new cinema fans are to be found not in the West but in the East and in Africa, where, as is so succinctly stated by the authors of "The African and the Cinema" (reviewed on Page 190) "the moving picture is understood by the unsophisticated natives to a degree which astonishes people who have experienced their comparative inability to recognise still pictures." Here is a possibility of commercial exploitation therefore which is not being neglected.

Indigenous production is only just starting but native industries exist in China, Japan and India, although in each case they are unable to supply the demand. The balance is mostly made up from Hollywood, whose entertainment values in any case have set the pace for every producer in the world.

In China, according to the most recent statistics 336 of the features shown during the year came from America, 51 from Chinese studios and 28 from other countries; in Japan, although there is a strict censorship which prevents any "guying of the military" or "overlong kisses," 270 American pictures were released as compared with 25 from Germany and 46 from the rest of the world. In India 73 per cent of the footage shown was of American origin though this must be offset against the fact that, of the 670 theatres working, 330 show exclusively Indian programmes. In the Dutch East Indies there are 143 theatres and 60 per cent of the programmes are of American origin. In Ceylon, with 13 theatres, the figure is 60 per cent and in East Africa, with 13 theatres, it is 75 per cent.

The overlordship of Hollywood is an embarrassment, for though we who live within the orbit of the same type of civilisation know that screen standards are not normal standards, those whose civilisation, although older, is alien to the West, have no such knowledge. The possibilities of misunderstanding are immense and when the Hollywood versions of Western conventions of conduct clash with those of the audience, the verdict is to the detriment of the Westerner. There is no need to labour the effect on the prestige and influence of the white administrator. The work of a hundred years can be undone, so it is averred, in as many minutes.

Where, on the other hand, the indigenous culture has no such high standard, the *habitué* of the cinema seeks to imitate what he has seen. There is the story of Dakar told in one of the League of Nations publications which says that, after the showing of a certain crime film, there was an epidemic of burglaries in which the technique of the housebreaker was identical with that in the film.

What then is to be done? Certainly a censorship of greater or lesser intensity exists in all countries. In Japan, for example, it refused a licence to Warner's *Sons O' Guns* and Columbia's *The King Steps Out*. In the Dutch East Indies no film is allowed to show racial or religious differences, strikes, riots or "sex." In Malay the Censor always cuts or bans any film which reflects on the prestige of the white race or contains murder, crime, shooting or horror. But censorship is not enough. It is at the best a negative force, whereas the corrective is, and must be, positive.

Herein lies the importance of Colonial and Dominion Governments realising the latent possibilities of the film. The Bantu Experiment has shown that in the early stages at any rate, the native African will accept both entertainment and instruction at one show. The lead given by these early experiments should be followed up, preferably by means of such a central organisation as is adumbrated by the authors of the Report. Further researches should be carried out along the lines indicated in the conclusions, that is to say:

"Is the natives' enthusiasm for films apparent or real? What is the ideal type of programme for different localities? How much will the native pay? How far will he come to see a show for example, in leopard infested country? How far would films of Africa made by one group of Africans have more than a purely local, tribal appeal? How much educational propaganda in the films sticks?"

In the East the preference for home made films must be capitalised and, in order that the local industry may avoid the blunders and the period of trial and error that we in the West have experienced, it may be necessary for the Government to lend a helping hand. In China the Nanking authorities bought 100 sound-on-film machines for their educational campaign and used them for teaching the value of good government, practical civics, hygiene, and the rest. At the same time we in the West should encourage the general circulation of veracious documentaries of ourselves. The Bantu Report says that "scenes of life in Great Britain arouse great interest. Trooping the Colour was one of the most popular items in the programmes. The Jubilee film, pictures of the Royal Family, scenes of London streets and London life have a great appeal." There is no reason to suppose that such films would be any the less acceptable in other parts of the world. Here is a golden opportunity. In the interests of racial harmony, whether it be between tribe and tribe or between white and black or black and yellow, let films be used to show us to each other accurately and sympathetically.

THE QUARTER IN SCOTLAND

CHIEF CONCERN in Scotland during the last few months has been with the proposal to establish a Scottish Film Office, under the control of the Scottish Film Council. The arrangements are almost completed, and it is hoped to inaugurate the new development at a luncheon to be held in Glasgow fairly early in February.

There are now more film society members in Scotland than ever before. The Glasgow and Edinburgh Societies have considerably increased their membership; and, while the Inverness Society has expired, new societies have been formed at Dunfermline and at Fort William. In spite of this, Scotland has lost the position, which she has held for several years, of having the largest film society in Great Britain—Glasgow, with its 1,050 members, having been replaced by Tyneside, with 1,150. Membership of the Glasgow Society has, however, been closed for a long time, the cinema being occupied to its maximum capacity.

The Scottish Educational Film Association is continuing to make splendid progress, and several new branches have been opened within the last few months. The membership of the Association is now approaching 4,000.

The reviewing scheme set up by the Scottish Film Council has attracted considerable attention. All films reviewed under the scheme are reported on by two independent groups of teachers and by a panel of specialists whose duty it is, after themselves seeing the film, to collate the two earlier reports and prepare a final report.

The Specialist Panels and their Chairmen are:—

History and Civics: Prof. A. F. Basil Williams, Edinburgh University.

Geography: James Walker, Esq., Jordanhill Training College.

Science and Mathematics: Dr. R. A. Robb, Mathematics Dept., Glasgow University.

Language and Literature: Vacant.

Physical Education and Hygiene: Prof. P. S. Lelean, Edinburgh University.

Primary Subjects: Dr. W. B. Inglis, Education Dept., Glasgow University.

Arts and Crafts: W. O. Hutchinson, Esq., Director, School of Art, Glasgow.

During the last three months the general arrangements have been made for the use of films at the Empire Exhibition which is being held in Glasgow during the six summer months. They are as follows:—

(*a*) A cinema in which documentary and other films are to be shown will be administered by a "sponsors" committee, composed of nominated representatives of the Exhibition Committee, the Scottish Office, the G.P.O. Film Unit, the Commissioner for the Special Areas (Scotland), and other bodies and individuals who have contributed in meeting the cost of erecting and equipping the cinema. Programmes will be of approximately one hour's duration and the prices of admission will be 6*d.* (adults) and 3*d.* (children).

(*b*) The largest private pavilion at the Exhibition is being erected by William Beardmore & Co., Ltd., and Colvilles, Ltd. It will contain a cinema, seating about 250 persons, in which industrial films, illustrative of the processes and products of these and other firms, will be shown. No charge will be made for admission to this cinema.

(*c*) A cinematograph theatre to seat about 200 persons is being built in one of the Scottish pavilions. In it sub-standard (16mm.) films (sound and silent) will be shown, descriptive of the voluntary and state Scottish social services and, in particular, Education; Housing and Town and Regional Planning; Public Health; Municipal Services (Transport, Gas, Water, Electricity, etc.); and Voluntary Community Services.

In addition, a number of exhibitors are including the projection of sub-standard films as part of their displays.

(*d*) The Scottish Film Council is organising for the British Film Institute an Empire Amateur Film Festival, to be held on Saturday, May 28th (see advt.). In view of this Festival, the Scottish Amateur Film Festival will not be held in 1938. It will be resumed in 1939.

(*e*) The Social Service Panel of the Scottish Film Council is organising a Conference on Films for Children, to be held in the Exhibition on a Saturday during September.

On 30th November the Scottish Office announced that a fund was being collected for the making and showing of Scottish films. A donation of £5,000 has been received by Mr. John A. Mactaggart to this fund. Mr. John Grierson is acting as adviser on the production of the films which will deal with various aspects of Scottish life and achievements in industry, science, art and civics. A committee has been set up by the Scottish Development Council in connection with this scheme.

LIGHT-HEARTED VIKINGS

In the concluding article of his survey of the Film in Scandinavia Mr. H. FORSYTH HARDY *tells of progress in Denmark and describes the industry in the lilliput land of Norway—"one of the smallest countries in the world to undertake independent film production . . ."*

DENMARK AND NORWAY cannot claim to have made as distinctive contributions to cinema as Sweden has. Denmark may point to Karl Dreyer, who directed *The Master of the House* in his own country before going to France in 1927 to make the memorable *La Passion de Jeanne d'Arc*. And more recently we have seen *Fredlös*, which, though Swedish actors were employed and the story was set in Finland, was produced by the Nordisk Film Company of Copengahen. But, these apart, the Danish cinema and the new Norwegian cinema gradually emerging, are essentially domestic, and the standard of film craftsmanship is comparatively low. Films are produced for home consumption, with only occasional showings in the adjacent countries.

LIGHT-HEARTED COMEDIES

Despite the cramping effect of so limited a market, production in Denmark is thriving. Indifferent as their standards are by comparison with large production centres, the Danish films are highly popular throughout the country. In 1936, for example, the number of prints of domestic films continued to outrank all except the American. It is impossible, of course, to produce ambitious and elaborate films and show a profit, and this has had its inevitable effect on the Danish cinema. Most of the films are flimsy, light-hearted comedies appealing to a majority of the pleasure-loving Danes. Economically produced, they have the interest of *locale* as, to save expense on settings, natural backgrounds are freely used.

DENMARK IS AMBITIOUS . . .

While the average Danish film is content with a trivial theme, there have been one or two more ambitious productions. *The Bride of Palo*, on which Knud Rasmussen was working at the time of his death, was a dramatised documentary of Greenland. Its story of rivalry between two great hunters, Palo and Samo, had as background scenes of polar bear hunts, kayak races, salmon fishing, village feasting and glimpses of native children sunning themselves amongst the flowers of the short Greenland summer. The Nordisk Film Company, whose *Fredlös* has been shown widely in this country, produced a similar film last summer, *Laila*. This romantic story of the Lapp people is distinguished by its magnificent photography of the Northern snowscape and its authentic and refreshing scenes of Lapp life. The heroine, Laila, is played by a Swedish actress, Aino Taube.

. . . AND HAS GOVERNMENTAL SUPPORT

The Danish Government is taking an increasing interest in film production. Official assistance was given during the summer in the production of a naval film, *The Blue Soldiers of the Fleet*, by the Palladium Company (Svend Neilsen). The aim, I was told, was partly to give a fillip to recruiting. Other evidences of Government interest in film production include the series of films on the history of Denmark produced for exhibition at the Danish Pavilion in Paris and the yearly grant of £10,000 made by the State to the industry for the purpose of producing educational films. I understand that it is proposed to establish shortly a documentary film unit on the lines of the former E.M.B. and the G.P.O. Film Units in this country.

In the preceding article I discussed the varied film fare which the Scandinavian film-goer in general enjoys. During the first nine months of 1936, 229 feature films were released in Denmark. Of this total 147 were American, 41 German, 11 British, 10 Swedish, 9 French and 6 Danish. Other films released included 2 Austrian, 1 Hungarian, 1 Russian and 1 Jugoslavian. During the intervening period, French films have increased and German films declined in popularity. The only British film I noticed, incidentally, was *She Shall Have Music*, the Danish title being translated to me as "Music is Necessary"! Despite the entertainment tax of 40 per cent of box-office receipts, film-going is increasing. Last year there were about 350 cinemas, and since then a number of new theatres have been built and old houses modernised. In the provinces there are still a number of cinemas in buildings originally constructed for other purposes. No theatres are owned by foreign producers or distributors, and there are no circuits, both forms of ownership being impossible under Danish Law.

There is a growing circulation, I should add, for 16mm. films in Denmark. A theatre owned and operated by the Danish State Railways and located in the main railway station at Copenhagen specialises in these films.

NORWAY

Norway must be one of the smallest countries in the world to undertake independent film production. The minute market (there are only about 250 cinemas in the country) certainly holds out no prospect of profit, if it does not invite economic failure. The Government renders no aid to the producers, either in the form of subsidy or quota. When there is no material motive, the phenomenon can be explained only by suggesting that there is in Norway an increasing awareness of the social influence of the film and an anxiety to ensure that Norwegian ideas and ideals shall be adequately represented on the screen.

In a country under Socialist rule, the majority of the cinemas are municipally owned, and the main incentive for production has come from a company formed co-operatively by the major cities. Capital is derived chiefly from exhibition: the profits from showing foreign films are being used to subsidise a national cinema which may, in time, to

some extent, oust these same foreign films from the screen. A form of poetic injustice which will be appreciated by all but the foreign producers.

THREE FILMS

Of the three films in production in Oslo this summer, two were sponsored by the municipal association. *Fant* (*Gypsies*), adapted from a novel by the Norwegian author, Gabriel Scott, describes the life of the water gypsies who, in boats of devious kinds and doubtful age, roam about the fjords of Southern Norway. The approach of the film, I was told, will be sympathetic and romantic rather than socially critical, though the activities of the gypsies are not regarded with equal approval by everyone. *Fant* is directed by Tancred Ibsen, grandson of Henrik Ibsen, and the principal parts are being played by two actors from the National Theatre, Sonja Wigert and Alfred Maursted. The other film bears the odd title of *To Levende og en Död* (*Two Living and One Dead*). Adapted from the novel of the same name by Sigurd Christiansen, it analyses the mental struggle of a man who has always been put in the background by a more fortunate colleague. The directors who have tackled this exacting psychological theme are Tancred Ibsen and his mother-in-law, the actress Gyda Christensen, who also controls the New Theatre in Oslo. The cast includes Hans Jacob Nilsen, manager of the Bergen Theatre.

The third Norwegian film is *Bra Mennesker* (*Good People*), adapted from a book by Oskar Braaten who writes about working-class conditions. The director is Lief Sinding and the players, drawn from the Oslo theatres, include Sonja Wigert and Georg Lokkeberg. The film production centre is at Jar, the studio recently built on the outskirts of Oslo. An earlier film produced there was *Morderen uten Anskit* (*The Murderer Without a Face*), by the A/S Merkur Film.

DOCUMENTARY

Norway also has recently been attracted by possibilities of the documentary. A historical film is being made of polar exploration, to be shown at the International Polar Exhibition in Bergen in 1940. The director is George W. Willoughby, a young Norwegian, who is to have the co-operation of the Norwegian Government in restaging historical episodes and filming in general. The film, it is expected, will take three years to complete. Oslo also has a prosperous news-reel theatre.

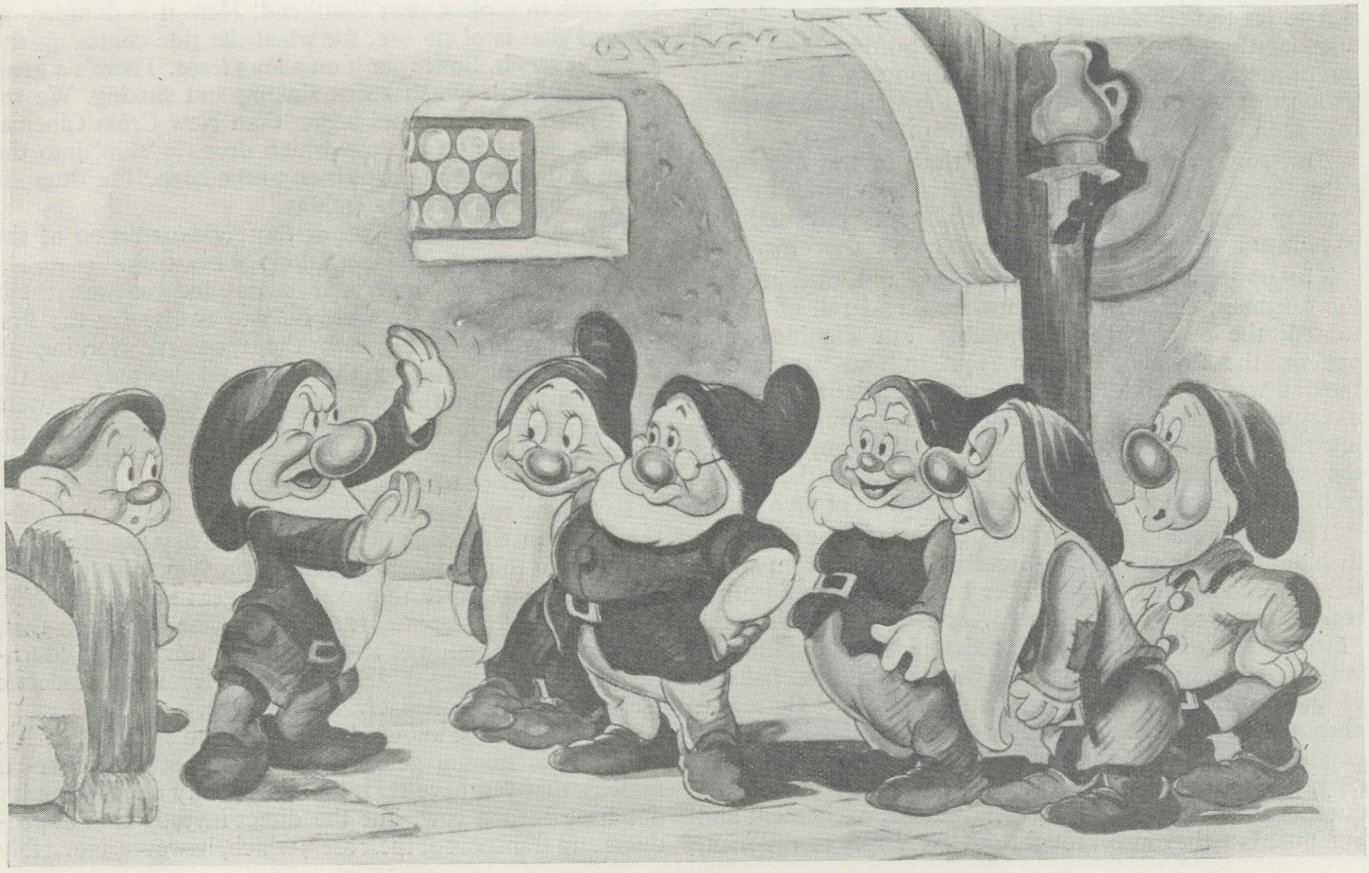
Oslo gave me one novel cinema experience. In one of the city's largest cinemas I was watching *The Last of Mrs. Cheyney*. Halfway through, the film suddenly stopped, with Mrs. Cheyney on her way upstairs to steal the Duchess of Ebley's pearls. A mechanical breakdown? Fire? Collapse of the operator? No! No one seemed in the least surprised or disturbed. Apparently it was merely the five-minute interval customarily interpolated in the middle of feature films shown in Norway. A quaint custom.

Lajla *Nordisk Films Kompagni*

SNOW WHITE AND

R.K.O. Radio

THE SEVEN DWARFS



ACTUALITY IN EDUCATION

A Postman, a Fireman, a Dustman and a Sewerman go to school and point the way to the Films.

by CATHERINE FLETCHER *and* G. J. CONS

THERE IS IN the Deptford district of the south-east of London, an L.C.C. junior mixed school. The immediate neighbourhood of the school is drab, the streets narrow, the people poor. The narrow streets are bounded by two busy main roads where the constant rush and roar of London's traffic passes from morning to night.

Yet this neighbourhood is the children's world. Here they live and shop and play and go to school and only on special and rare occasions do they go outside it even to take a penny bus or tram ride to Hilly Fields or Peckham shopping centre.

It was this neighbourhood we sought to utilise in our experiment in actuality. We aimed quite simply in getting the children into direct contact with the life of their neighbourhood, and so satisfying their normal curiosity in the real world and the people inhabiting it.

We selected certain aspects of the neighbourhood for direct investigation by the children—Postal Service, Civic Services (other than Postal Service), Road Transport, Rail Transport, Shops, Factories. The method chiefly employed was to let the children do their own reporting, to talk to and question the workers themselves. So they either went out of school into the neighbourhood to make their investigations, or we introduced some of the significant workers into the classroom for the children to interview.

And so, perhaps for the first time in the history of education, a postman, a dustman, a sewerman and a fireman came to school and were interviewed by little boys and girls of nine and ten years of age in their own classrooms.

The postman, rosy and round-faced and kind-hearted; the dustman, eloquent and humorous, and full of stories to tell; the sewerman, less voluble, but dignified and patient; the fireman, stalwart, upright and courageous; they all won the children's hearts in five minutes and had a very easy contact with them. They entered sympathetically into the situation and let the children ask them any questions they wanted to ask. The chief difficulty was to get them away from the children at the end of the afternoon of their visit.

They came into school in their uniforms—the dustman in his dustman's jacket and breeches, straight from work; the sewerman in his long rubber boots and heavy leather jacket, carrying his two lamps, one of which was the "little joker," or the Ringrose Firedamp Alarm; the fireman with his spanner and his axe and his shining brass helmet. It was amazing how the atmosphere of the classroom changed when these real people from the outside world entered into it. And what questions the children asked—ranging over every aspect of their work! Of course the questions brought out its essential drama, excitement and humour, but they also brought out the wages of the men, their hours of work, their holidays, their years of service, their daily routine, the differences in present and past conditions of work. We teachers sat and gaped before the unceasing flow of inquisitive questions the children asked, one or two of them embarrassing, for more than once the men swallowed hard before they answered! There was no doubt at all about the intellectual stimulus which this actuality situation gave to these children—some of them very backward in their rate of assimilation from the printed or written word.

They heard from the dustman how their dust was collected in the fine new Deptford motor lorries, each manned by six men, so different from the horses and carts of a few years ago.

"What happens to the dust after you have collected it?" a child asked.

"The refuse is loaded on to the dust-lorry," he answered, "and then taken down to the chute on the wharf at Deptford Creek. There it is shot into barges. We have two barges, each holding eighty tons. The tugs take the barges down the river to a place near Southend. Here it is dumped on to land that is of no use, for when the tide comes up the water covers it. So we get it on a long lease. There's a great pile of rubbish which keeps sinking and sinking. We set light to it. It is ten times bigger than New Cross Cinema. There's a crane on the top which drops a 'skip' into the barge and shoots the rubbish on to the heap. The dump is always alight and always sinking."

This is just one example of the vivid narration of the dustman concerning the conditions of his work.

And when the sewerman came and answered the children's questions we were able to realise for the first time that there, underneath the roadway, working all day with bent back in the darkness, lit only by the light of a torch, in foul air, standing in filthy water, were the men who with hoe in hand kept the sewers clean for the drainage to pour away into the big L.C.C. mains which lead to the lower reaches of the river.

It will be realised that these actuality contacts had for the children the value of experience. They gave them, in addition to the knowledge required, a sympathy with the man at the job which they could not get in any other way. And so, social awareness can develop, and through that, adjustment to the life of to-day. This is surely civic education, which is quite a different thing from the academic imposition of so-called civic knowledge.

Here, too, in the knowledge gained from shops, factories, transport is human geography—not the study of far-off regions that can have no meaning to a city child who may not have seen a cow, but the direct investigation of products and transport of their area, which, however, inevitably

takes the child beyond his immediate environment. For when the milk-shops were studied, the milkman was interviewed, the local dairy shops investigated, the demand was then to see a distributing centre, and after that a farm.

Here, too, is history, not the learning of events in the past, which are soon forgotten because they have no bearing on the life of the child, but in the particular and human and concrete understanding of the evolution of those services which are part of the complex life of the neighbourhood which the child knows.

Moreover, these actuality contacts and their associations provide natural opportunities for children to talk and write, so they are encouraged to become articulate in terms of the real situations of the world in which they live, rather than in terms of fairy stories or grammatical exercises. Such real jobs as those of writing letters, newspaper reports, articles for magazines, film scenarios give fine scope for the English work of children.

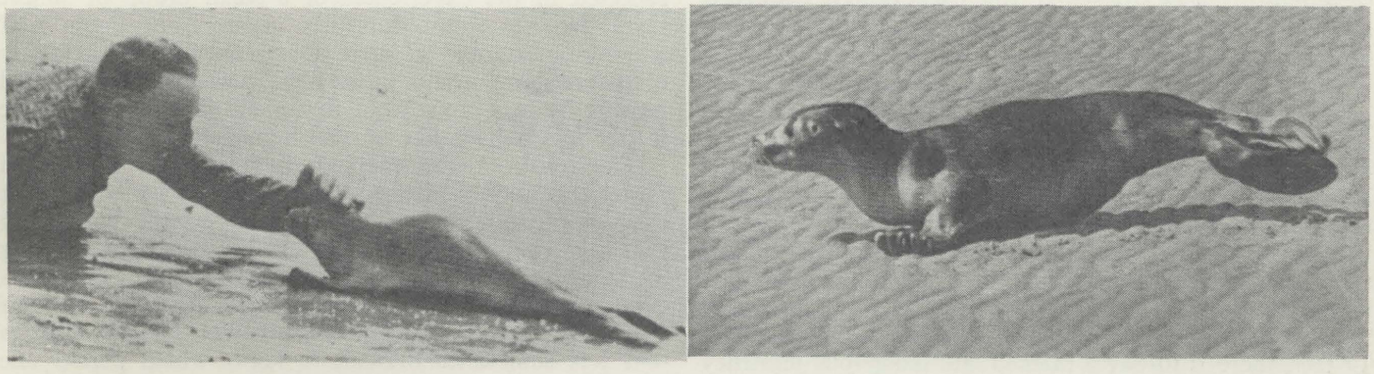
Thus, very briefly, we have indicated that this actuality study of the neighbourhood of the school gives the clue to a complete reorientation of that section of the school syllabus which concerns man in relation to his environment. For the young child as well as the non-academic child, this is not naturally conceived in terms of history, geography, civics, but in terms of particular topics, particular people, particular situations. We therefore suggest that the soundest educational approach to the study of man and his environment, is in terms of dynamic topics selected from the particular environment of the school, and introduced to the child by direct contact with the people concerned with the work involved.

Here we have opening out to us an evolution of the school syllabus in terms of the "New Humanities," which will involve a breakdown of some of the artificialities of the conventional school time-table, a solution of the problem of the syllabus for the new senior-schools or non-selective central schools where the children do not need to learn for examination purposes the tabulated results of the abstractions of adults.

We have said that the actuality study of the neighbourhood does not mean that the study is confined to the neighbourhood, for whatever topic is selected, Postal Service, Rail Transport or Milk Shops, his investigation will soon carry the child beyond the range of what he can directly experience or personally investigate. It is here that the film has the most essential part to play in school education. It is a part which has little relationship to the film used in the undiluted instructional sense, where abstractions have already been made, and the film is nothing more than an animated text-book, but it must play a part which is able to extend the child's imaginative experience, and therefore his sympathy and his knowledge, beyond the range of his own neighbourhood.

For example, think how significant a film such as *Night Mail* will be to the children who have interviewed a local postman in the classroom, have been to a local sorting office and grasped first hand the processes of incoming and outgoing letters. Think what it would mean for education if we had many more films of this kind that would follow on the children's actuality work in their neighbourhood—films that are simple and short enough for children to understand. A few of the Post Office films fulfil this need, but others are too complex in their analysis for children. We need films about every kind of public service. The children interviewed the dustman and heard from him how the dust was piled on barges and carried down the river and thrown on the great heap near Southend, that was always alight and always sinking. Here is material for a film. Here are opportunities for local authorities to work in co-operation with schools in making the kinds of films that are needed. Indeed, such actuality work as we have described gives wonderful opportunity for film-making on the part of children in school.

We are then saying in conclusion that the realist or documentary film, conceived in terms simple enough for children to understand, is essentially the educational film; that it has its significant place in a school curriculum where the "New Humanities" are studied on the basis of an actuality investigation of the neighbourhood in which the children live. There is a useful if subsidiary place in school for the kind of instructional film which describes actual processes, but there should be no place in the junior or senior school for the type of instructional film which attempts to do the work of the text-book in the same kind of way as the text-book. Far too many of these already existent films are based upon old-fashioned teaching methods where information already abstracted and generalised is dished up for the children to memorise. And so it is unfortunate that many of the so-called instructional films serve the purpose of the mediocre teacher who wants something useful to help his children to pass their examinations. These films have no relation whatever to the adaptation of the growing citizen to the world he lives in. It is most important that the educational film should evolve where it is most significant; where it can fulfil its own medium as well as the central purpose of education.



From a UFA film on Seal catching

"GREY CASTLES STORMED AND GRAVE GREY KINGS BEREFT"

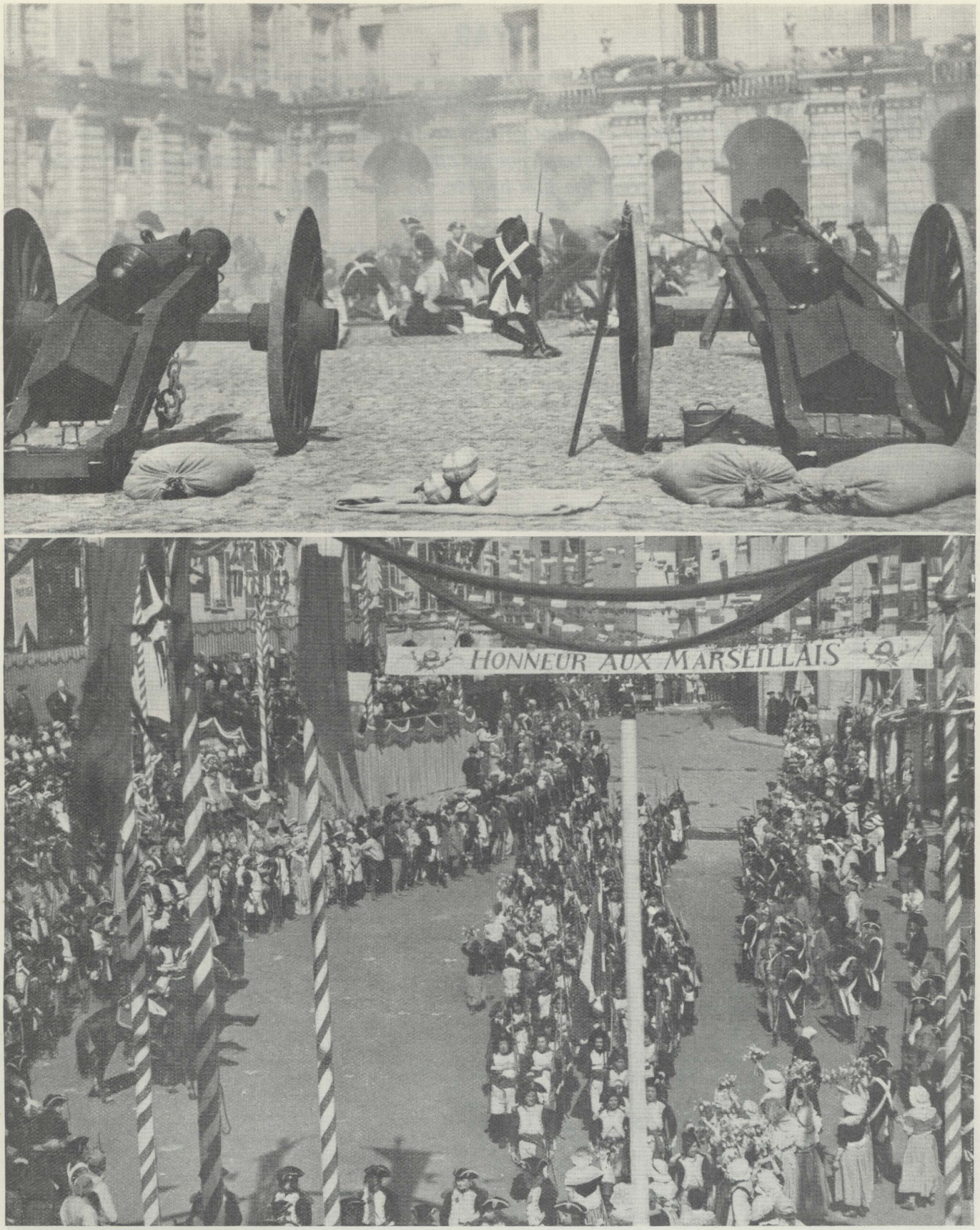
Scenes from La Marseillaise, the new French Co-operative film, reviewed below by CARL KOCH

WHEN JEAN RENOIR at the end of our collaboration in *La Grande Illusion* invited me to work with him on our next film *La Marseillaise*, I was greatly attracted by the idea, but at the same time my mind was not free from certain misgivings. I knew that *La Marseillaise* was likely to be a landmark in the history of cinema production (it was to be carried out as a co-operative effort) for the necessary capital had already been collected in 2-franc subscriptions to a very large total. But I was frankly disturbed at the thought of working on a historical film, even with my friend Renoir as director.

I have no use for the usual run of historical films. They generally consist of astonishing sets and a horde of actors and extras dressed up as if for a fancy dress ball or the Lord Mayor's Procession and speaking a most stilted kind of "ye olde hystorical dyalecte", while a small army of so-called technical experts fuss round to make certain that every detail is historically correct. Producers of this type of historical film seem to think that the more the actors dress up and strut about in a stilted artificial manner the easier it will be for the public to identify itself with them. In fact, there is to-day a marked and dangerous tendency for the cinema to divorce itself so far from the reality of our daily life that to a certain extent all films—even those whose setting is supposed to be contemporary—show many of the characteristics of the pseudo-historical film.

Renoir in his earlier films has proved himself a brilliant realist director, and in *La Marseillaise* he has approached the problem of the historical film from a new angle. History as he treats it, becomes actual in that the great events of the French Revolution are not depicted directly but are reflected in the experiences of a small group of simple revolutionaries from Marseilles. Apart from Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette, there are practically no characters of historical importance in the film. Robespierre is glimpsed passing by in a crowd, but that is all. The simple people in our film behave like normal human beings.

The result of this method of treatment is that you forget that it is a historical film as you have the feeling that you are present at contemporary events. I may add that this feeling persisted even during the actual shooting of the exteriors. When the streets and squares of Fontainebleau were filled with the actors and actresses in their French Revolution costumes—aristocrats, soldiers, citizens—it was sometimes difficult to know which period one was actually living in. I had the feeling that I was participating in an experiment with time.



Photos show (*top left*) Louis XVI; (*top right*) Storming of the Tuileries and (*below*) arrival of the Marseillais in Paris

WAR

The Film in war-time is here described by Miss MARIE SETON *in the fourth of her series of articles on the British Cinema. The photographs are reproduced by courtesy of the Controller of H.M. Stationery Office, and are taken from the official war film "The Battle of the Somme" and from the film by Mr. D. W. Griffith*

IF THE READER will now and then glance at the list of films appended to this article, it will remind him that a considerable section of the British film industry did its utmost to carry into effect its slogan, "business as usual", during the four years of the War. After the first six months, during which time any film remotely connected with the idea of war was put forward and highly recommended, the film trade endeavoured to turn the thoughts of the audience as far away as possible from the misery of current events. It certainly succeeded, for it was during the War that the picture palace lost much of its penny-dreadful reputation and began to develop into a centre for family amusement.

The appended list of war-time productions made in England is far from complete. It does not mention the extensive output of topical and propagandist shorts which were made to popularise war and warn the public against the danger of spies. I have not included them because they were a product of war-time necessity and have not left any lasting influence upon the development of British films. The two chief sponsors of these up-to-the-minute patriotic pictures were Sir William Jury and Will G. Barker, both of whom retired after the War.

The three most active production companies who continued to make mainly non-military story-films were Cecil Hepworth's company, where the popular screen actor, Henry Edwards, turned director in 1916; the London Film Company, for whom Maurice Elvey, probably England's most consistently successful director until 1927, made a number of pictures; and Ideal, who specialised in transferring famous stage successes to the screen with, as far as possible, the original cast. Such actors as Sir George Alexander, Henry Ainley and Irene Vanbrugh played their stage rôles on the screen almost as a matter of course. Thus they consolidated a theatrical tradition of film acting which has never been eradicated in this country. It is also apparent that the war period further encouraged the use of popular British fiction as screen material; and this fashion was quickly adopted by American companies in their bid for a greater distribution in England.

THE AMERICAN INVASION

The problem of America's enormous increase in distribution in England began to attract the notice of the national Press during 1916. W. G. Faulkner wrote an article in the *Evening News* in which he expressed concern that:—

"The war has given one trade opportunity to America of which she is availing herself to the full. She is fast becoming the universal provider of moving pictures, the world's camera entertainer. . . . Before the war London had become the world's film market . . . through which films from every country proceeded on their way to the 65,000 picture theatres scattered over the habitable globe. . . . Half the world being at war, America politely steps in and, in the name of strict neutrality and with a 'due sense of patriotism', first of all closes and padlocks her own door against the films of belligerent countries and then sallies forth to capture the film trade of the world."

It is an interesting fact that some of the most rabidly anti-German films were made in America while she still maintained neutrality.

"A moderate American estimate of the film footage shown in British theatres every week is 20,000,000 feet; but," continues Mr. Faulkner, "it is evident, seeing that most theatres use, in bi-weekly changes, at least 6,000 feet per week, that the consumption of film is nearer 30,000,000 feet per week, for 90 per cent of which America is responsible . . . When we grasp the fact that hitherto the world's agents have bought in the London market . . . it is quite easy to see that with the deluge of American pictures in London and the corresponding scarcity of British and allied countries, there is hardly anything else to buy but American pictures. All that the Americans have to do here is to print copies, which they do for less than 2*d*. a foot. The buyer, whoever he may be, can put his name on the film and send it out from London to the ends of the earth. This done, the world's markets are captured by the Americans from London. The monopoly system, which ties and binds its customers, completes the business."

A further extension of American enterprise in England was reported in the *Daily Express* a little later.

"American film-producers, instead of waiting until the outcry for more British films results in something to their disadvantage, have now completed a film-production wholly made in this country, with Sir John Martin-Harvey in the leading part.

"A second film, with Miss Dorothy Gish in the principal role, will be started immediately in studios at Twickenham.

"Now comes Mr. Carl Laemmle, the Napoleonic founder and head of Universal City, to make films in London under the general title of British Universal Pictures.

" 'I hope to begin in about four weeks' time,' Mr. Laemmle told me yesterday. 'My producers and stars at first will be American, because I have to make arrangements to release the films in America, but in the course of time I hope to build up a large British producing unit'."

But this prejudice against Americans in the film trade did not reflect an official point of view. The Government's aim in film production was to show the War on the screen in the most powerful manner possible. Therefore, when David Wark Griffith came to London in 1917 with a copy of *Intolerance*, he was invited by the British War Office to make a story-film in co-operation with them. The film made was *Hearts of the World*, of which *The Times* says that "into a story of love and romance are introduced scenes of actual fighting on the Western Front." The copyright was retained by Griffith.

THE WAR OFFICE FILM

But the most famous British war picture was released almost two years before Griffith's film was shown. It was *The Battle of the Somme*, photographed for the War Office mainly by J. B. MacDowell, head of the British and Colonial Film Company, and G. H. Malins, of Gaumont. This film, the horror of which was nothing in comparison with that shown in the contemporary war films distributed in France and some neutral countries, caused a great deal of controversy in the press. James Douglas described the film in the *Star* of August 25th, 1916. He writes that:

"Somebody in the War Office or at G.H.Q. has at last realised that the war film is the only substitute for invasion. Somebody has grasped the power of the moving picture to carry the war on to British soil. . . . We see the Manchesters on the eve of the battle standing in a circle round a chaplain in a white surplice. . . . We see a general sitting like a bronze man on a bronze charger addressing Lancashire Fusiliers and Royal Fusiliers. . . . Then comes the grim prelude—shell-fire. . . . Fantastic smoke-shapes, strangely slow in the melting. Dark upheavals. And under them we know that German soldiers are hidden in the creases and wrinkles of the soil. We see the monstrous howitzer with its fifteen-inch mouth, its recoil, the shaking of its mounting, the tremor of branches. It looks like a live thing. . . .

"We see helmeted soldiers fixing their bayonets and being passed round the corner of a trench like a football crowd going through a turnstile. We see a vast mine exploding. . . . We see all the gears and gadgets of the complex war-machine. It is cold business, iron science, hard routine, grim system, stark order moving men like machines and machines like men.

"We see a row of soldiers standing with fixed bayonets in a trench waiting for the signal to scramble over the parapet. Suddenly an officer is seen on the parapet with a gallant gesture of leadership. He is not there alone for a second. The whole line lifts and goes simultaneously. All but two. One on the right. One on the left. They slip back very quietly. They lie against the sloping face of the trench. They lie upright with their faces to the clay and the enemy. The man on the right does not move a limb. The man on the left moves his arms a little and then is at rest. . . . We see the others running forward, one falling here, one falling there, until there is only one gallant figure visible, strolling dauntlessly into the storm.

"Is it right to let us see brave men dying? Yes. Is it a sacrilege? No . . . these pictures are good for us. The dead on the battlefield, the drivers of the gun-teams steering the wheels clear of the corpses, the demented German prisoners, the kindly British soldiers showering cigarettes upon their captives, the mangled heap of anguish on the stretcher. . . . Dead men, dead horses, the dead dog lying beside his dead master—these vilenesses are war. War is the enemy, and Germany is its patentee, its idolater, its worshipper. It is our task to beat the German sword into a ploughshare so that the nations may learn war no more."

The Dean of Durham, in a letter to *The Times*, expresses a very different point of view:

"Sir,—A few days since public opinion manifested so much disgust at the proposal to produce the British Cabinet on the cinematograph stage that the proposal was abandoned. . . . Yet crowds of Londoners feel no scruple at feasting their eyes on pictures which present the passion and death of British soldiers in the Battle of the Somme. A 'film' of a few statesmen sitting together in a chamber is held to be an insult to the self-respect of the nation; a 'film' of war's hideous tragedy is welcome!

"I beg leave respectfully to enter a protest against an entertainment which wounds the heart and violates the very sanctities of bereavement. . . ."

The *Battle of the Somme* film met very varying receptions from the exhibitors. The *Evening Standard* of August, 1916, reports two entirely different reactions from cinema proprietors in the same street.

"Hammersmith loves pictures. So do Barnes and Walham Green, and every night they throng up in their thousands and pour into the continuous shows given at the Broadway and the Blue Halls and the Palace. . . . Last week the British official film showing THE BATTLE OF THE SOMME was the talk of the whole district. But the Broadway showed it not. Instead, appeared a slide with the following explanation:—

'WE ARE NOT SHOWING THE BATTLE OF THE SOMME.
THIS IS A PLACE OF AMUSEMENT,
NOT A CHAMBER OF HORRORS'."

And here is a conversation between the Broadway's managing director, Mr. W. Jefferson Woods, and an *Evening Standard* representative. His reasons are worth recording.

" 'What is your object in putting on such a slide?'

" 'Simply a matter of feeling and taste. . . . If we were showing it, people said they were not coming.'

" 'But why not show it, thousands are seeing it?'

" 'I don't think it is suitable for those who have lost relatives. I think it is harrowing and distressing.'

" 'But it is historical.'

" 'I was at the trade view,' said Mr. Woods, 'and one man gave a shriek and said, "Let me out. I feel so bad. I have just lost a brother".'

" 'But the public can stand seeing what the boys have to go through.'

" 'The papers are full of it every morning. We see for ourselves the wounded walking about our streets . . . and another point,' added Mr. Woods, 'in the film you see stretcher after stretcher coming in with wounded Germans. I think it is likely to create pity for the brutes. It is possible for people to say "Poor devils!" It is likely to create pity for the enemy'."

The same *Standard* reporter estimated that the two Blue Halls in the district showed the Somme film to between 12,000 and 15,000 people in seven showings. The Blue Halls' proprietor told him that:

" 'One wounded soldier who had been through the battle himself was greatly excited. He kept on saying what was coming . . . and wanted me to let him get on the platform and lecture about it. One boy recognised his brother in the picture, an officer; "Look, look," he cried, "that's my brother".' "

Early in the War Lloyd George said, "The cinema is the most compelling education any child can have." Lord Beaverbrook was of the same opinion. On the 17th August, 1916, the *Kinematograph and Lantern Weekly* reported:

"That one of Mr. Lloyd George's objects in seeking to give it (the Somme film) every possible publicity is to bring home to the munition workers how much the Army is dependent on their exertions. . . . We cannot imagine any munition worker seeing the film through without forming a resolution to work even harder than before . . . and we specially appeal to exhibitors in munition areas to see that this all-important lesson is driven home."

During the course of the war the War Office collected over half-a-million feet of film. It is to-day in the custody of the War Museum. This material, some of which was incorporated into a series of reconstructed war films made by Bruce Woolfe in the early 'twenties, and some of which was distributed in neutral countries, was shot by the news-reel men who, at the outbreak of war, were given a similar status to the press war correspondents.

THE NEWS-REEL

"Go anywhere, anytime, anyhow and get home" was the motto of the war-time Pathé Gazette quintette, two of whom, Jock Gemmell and Frank Basil, are still with Pathé. Unlike the French cameramen at the front, the British, although they were given Army rank, had no military training. When they were not on special technical work it was left to their own discretion as to what was suitable news. The general opinion, expressed by both official War Office cameramen and independent news-reel men, is that British audiences did not have the same taste for gruesome pictures as the Continent, an attitude of mind which has persisted.

Cameramen found that they were given every facility in France; in fact, Frank Basil's opinion is that the news-reel man's job was no more difficult during war than in peace-time—always providing he did not mind the risks. Restrictions, based on pre-war customs, began to be modified. For example, up to the time of the War cameramen were not allowed within a hundred yards of the King. Interviewing important people became increasingly easy.

SOME FILMS 1915–1920

From Well-Known Plays

1915 Pinero's *Sweet Lavender* (Hepworth Company with Henry Ainley, Alma Taylor and Chrissie White)
1916 Pinero's *Iris* (Ideal Film with Henry Ainley, Alma Taylor and Stewart Rome, directed by Cecil Hepworth)
1916 Pinero's *Second Mrs. Tanqueray* (with Sir George Alexander)
1916 Pinero's *The Gay Lord Quex* (Ideal Film, with Sir George Alexander and Irene Vanbrugh)
1916 Pinero's *Trelawny of the Wells* (directed by Hepworth)
1916 Robertson's *Caste* (Ideal Film with Sir John Hare)
1916 Arnold Bennett's *The Great Adventure* (Ideal Film with Henry Ainley and Esme Hubbard)
1916 Wilde's *Lady Windermere's Fan* (Ideal Film with Lena Ashwell)
1916 Du Maurier's *Trilby* (London Film Company with Sir Herbert Tree)
1916 *Merchant of Venice* (with Matheson Lang)
1916–17 Somerset Maugham's *Smith* (London Film Company, directed by Maurice Elvey)
1916–17 *Macbeth* (with Sir Herbert Tree and Constance Collier)

From Famous Books

1915 *Under the Red Robe*, by Stanley Weyman (Clarendon Company)
1915 *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* (Ideal Exclusive)
1916 *Far from the Madding Crowd*, by Thomas Hardy (Ideal Film with Florence Turner)
1916 *The Vicar of Wakefield* (Ideal, with Sir John Hare)
1916 *The Christian*, by Hall Caine (London Film Company)
1916 *Shirley*, by Charlotte Bronte (Ideal Film)
1916 *Rupert of Hentzau*, by Anthony Hope (London Film Company with Henry Ainley)
1916 *The Mill on the Floss*, by George Eliot (Tranhouser Films Ltd.)
1916 *She* (directed by Will G. Barker with Alice Delysia for Lucoque Ltd.)
1916–17 *The Grand Babylon Hotel*, by Arnold Bennett (directed by Hepworth)
1919 *Lorna Doone* (Butcher's)
1920 *Daniel Deronda*, by George Eliot (with Clive Brook—Butcher's)
1920 *Little Dorrit* (Butcher's, with Lady Tree and Lanthorne Burton)

Films Directed by Maurice Elvey

1915 *Florence Nightingale*
1915 *Esther*
1915 *Fine Feathers*
1916 *When Knights Were Bold*
1917 *The Life of Nelson* (first time the British Government co-operated in making a story film)

Film Directed by D. W. Griffith

1918 *Hearts of the World* (made in co-operation with the War Office. The negative was taken to America by Griffith, who sold copies of the film to England)

Films Directed by Henry Edwards

1916 *A Welsh Singer* (with Florence Turner)
1916 *Doorsteps* (with Florence Turner)
1917–18 *Broken Threads* (suggested by a poem of Edwin Arnold)
1918 *Possession* (with Chrissie White and Gerald Ames)
1918 *The City of Beautiful Nonsense*

Trick Films

1916 *Kinotank* (made by Percy Smith)
1916 *The Strafer Strafed* (the Cuffley zep tricked by Percy Smith)
1916 *Only a Room-er* (a Martin trick comedy in which spirits and human beings walk through solid walls)

Of all the big men of the War Lloyd George was the least camera conscious; he was a marvellously effective figure on the screen.

Self-consciousness has always been one of the greatest difficulties facing news-reel cameramen in this country. Celebrities become tongue-tied, while crowds tend neither to look at the camera nor to move out of the way of it. It is a national characteristic; while elsewhere almost any man is a natural actor from the news-reel point of view. This reticence is probably the reason why horrific pictures are usually excluded, even to-day, from topicals. An interesting example of this attitude is the difference between the French and English news-reel of the *Hindenburg* disaster.

TRICK FILMS AND CARTOONS

The forerunner of the *Hindenburg*, the dreaded "zeps", figured in a trick film made by the ingenious Percy Smith. *The Strafer Strafed* was a kind of trick-topical, for it appeared a week after a zeppelin was brought down in flames at the village of Cuffley. The disaster was reconstructed in Smith's house at Southgate with a miniature toy, some cotton wool and a trail of smoke. In the middle of 1916 the public was full of wonder about the awful and infernal tanks which had just made their appearance. In November the *Bioscope* advertised a Kineto film, also made by Smith, called *Kinotank*. The advertisement is interesting:

> "The man who invented the tanks—whoever he may be—is a genius, but the man who conceived this film is more—he is a genius, a humorist and an artist rolled into one! If we were all as pessimistic and took the War with such deadly seriousness as some do, life would not be worth living or the dear old country worth saving."

It was such a realistic and terrifying film that sections of it were cut by the War Office. The Press described it as "a nightmare conception of trench dreadnoughts".

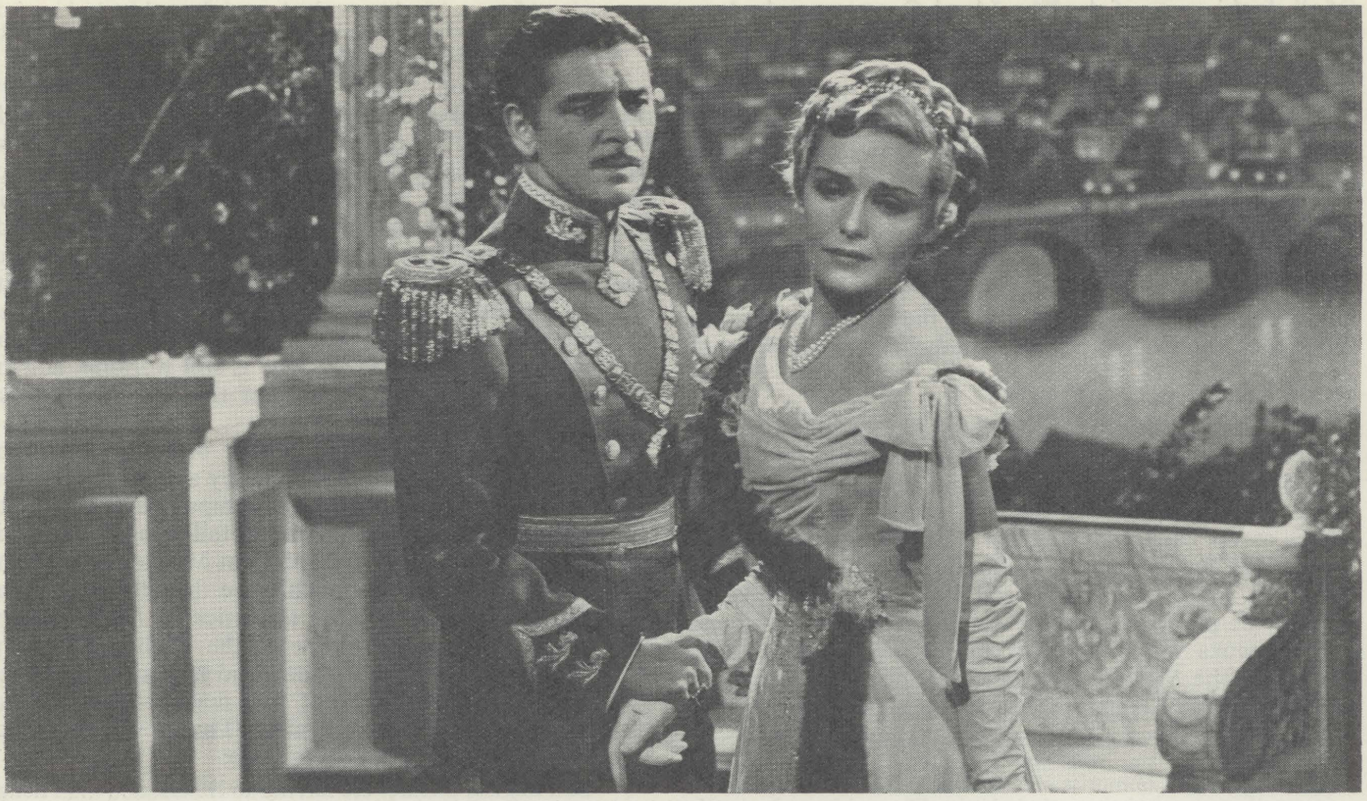
> "In the first part of the picture we see a front line trench, with a group of farm buildings in the foreground and a clump of pollard willows stripped of leaves and twigs. Then the tanks come . . . crawling on their bellies, up and over the uneven ground; stopping here to bite a lump out of the landscape, there to crunch a house into separate bricks, and climb over the heap of refuse. From all round their gleaming sides come quick spurts of flame. . . . Then suddenly a German officer runs into the picture, stands aghast at the horror before him, and—the top of the tank opens, a long prehensile arm comes out, a snake-like thing with fingers groping wildly in the air. It waves about. There are eyes in its finger-tips. It sees the colonel, snatches him up, lifts him on high, and drops him kicking into a collecting-box slung on behind. . . . Kineto's man . . . saw the tank as an intelligent meat cover. . . ."

The description makes one think of Walt Disney's mechanical cloak-room attendant and Donald Duck. Until the arrival of the American animated cartoons of *Mutt and Jeff*, the drawn cartoon was far behind the trick film in originality. A number of series were made in England, more often than not merely adapting the methods of the lightning artist to the screen. A great many of them were topical subjects. By the end of the War, in spite of their inferiority and lack of original ideas, the cartoon had superseded the trick film in popularity. The leading cartoonists were Anson Dyer, who is still working, and the comic-dog-artist Studdy, who after the War had a great success with "Bonzo".

But in spite of a certain number of interesting films produced during the War, the industry as a whole had lost ground. The famous American vamps, beginning with Theda Bara, had gained an enormous following; such heroic cowboys as William S. Hart and Tom Mix suited the taste of war-conditioned youth much more than the less sensational British stars; while the slap-stick of Mack Sennett and Chaplin had no prototype in the studios here. The public had grown used to slickness and sensation. It wanted glamour, which is an element that never entered British studios until the advent of Korda. This is what Rebecca West wrote in *Time and Tide* in 1920:

> "Still English pictures are inferior to American. . . . (Though the English film) has risen to a certain level of decorum, it continues to be dingy and fatuous. There is hardly ever any exhilaration to be got from an English film. It may be correct and diligent, but it is in the same category of pleasure as a temperance drink."

Such an attitude, and it was a very general one (I remember I always tried to avoid seeing British films), was not calculated to encourage the new people who came into the cinema just after the War. The attempt at a revival of the British film industry was first made by Sir Oswald Stoll in 1919; while Welsh Pearson began to make some of the best films ever produced in England. But the prejudice against foreigners and their product, which manifested itself at the outbreak of War, was now turned as indiscriminately upon the work of British studios, causing a further migration of actors and technicians abroad.



The New. *Prisoner of Zenda* 1937 *United Artists*

MEMORABLE AND NOT SO MEMORABLE

Entertainment Films reviewed by ALAN PAGE

THE END OF 1937 and the beginning of 1938 is the season for meditation, for recalling the memorable films of the past twelve months. Any that are memorable go down at once in the "best of the year" lists. It is surprising, and rather shocking, to find how many films are entirely unmemorable.

During the last quarter four films were shown which were definitely memorable. They all came from Hollywood. First there was *They Won't Forget*. Those who saw it will certainly not forget it. Unfortunately they can't have been many for the film had only the briefest West End run and it has not yet been generally released. But when it is, it should not be missed. It is not a pleasant film, nor is it a particularly entertaining one, but it is immensely powerful and gripping. It has an axe to grind and it grinds it so forcefully that the sharp edge cuts right into one.

The main theme is the prejudice, and even hatred, that the South still bears the North for having won the civil War. In a small Southern town there is an unscrupulous District Attorney who is determined to further his ambitions regardless of anybody or anything. His great chance comes when a girl student is murdered. The teacher is a Northerner. What could be simpler for the District Attorney than that he should have the man arrested and convicted. Whether he committed the crime or not is a matter of no importance. What is important is that the conviction of a Northerner, a hated Yankee, will please the cretinous mob of the Southern town; will, in fact, win votes for the D.A. An incredible trial is staged. Nation-wide interest and prejudice are aroused by the yellow press. Witnesses are bullied and tricked and primed with lies to secure a conviction. The eminent defence lawyer from New York extracts the truth from a terrified negro, but he is too late. The result is a foregone conclusion. A conscience-prompted governer commutes the death sentence, again in vain, for the mob pull the man off a train and lynch him. And when the wretched man's wife has thrown the D.A.'s consoling cheque in his face, he turns to his reporter-toady and admits that he still wonders who did the murder. This depressing tale of inhuman cruelty offers no solution to the problems of injustice that are raised. It simply tells its story and leaves it at that. Therein lies its power. The solution, any possible action, must come from the person who sees it. The film is a fierce indictment of mob lynching and all the motives that cause it, but the focal point is the District Attorney and his cynical use of all the worst elements in his fellow citizens to gain his own ends. Mervyn Le Roy directed and his work is a model piece of story telling, restrained and under-emphasised. We are never told who the real murderer was, although one cannot help having one's suspicions. The cast is not spectacular, but it is sound, brilliant even in the case of Claude Rains as the District Attorney.

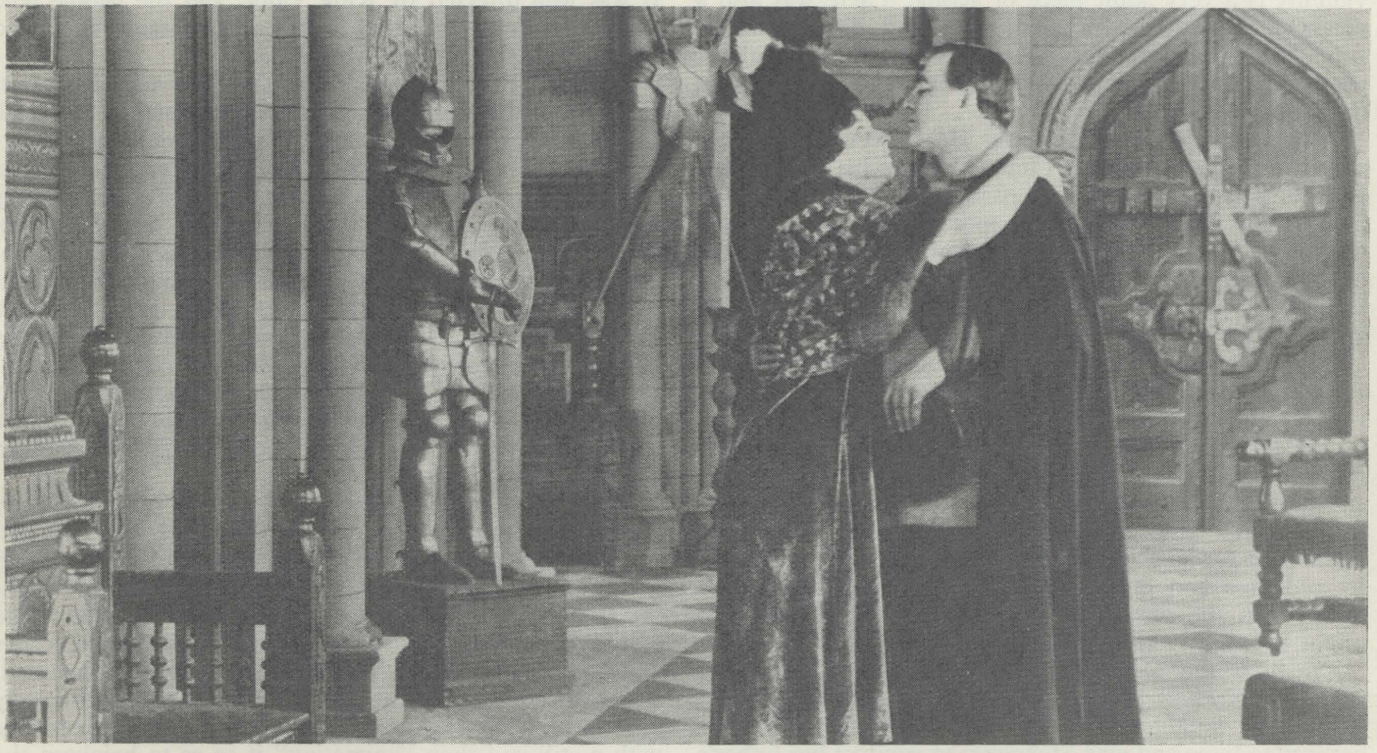
A similar type of film was *Dead End*, a cross-section of

a day in the lives of those people, most of them unfortunate and a few fortunate, who live at the dead, or waterfront, end of 52nd Street in New York. Side by side with the most appalling slums are huge blocks of apartment houses where wealthy socialites live in "romantic" surroundings. A great deal happens in that one day. A notorious gangster comes back to see his mother and gets slapped in the face for his pains and later killed in a rooftop chase. A struggling architect realises that the poor girl is more worth-while than the rich one and a gang of urchins beat up a rich boy and get embroiled with the law. The atmosphere is good and so is most of the acting—the boys especially—but somehow the scene is too crowded and there is too much detail for a single set. Too many problems are happily resolved at the end of one day, a legacy from the stage version of the film.

Then there was *Zola*, a highly creditable picturisation of the Dreyfus *affaire* as it affected Zola, with a prelude showing the rise of Zola from enthusiastic poverty to best-selling pompousness. Liberties have been taken with facts and dates, as we are warned before the film starts, but they do not matter greatly. The handling of the Dreyfus case from the legal point of view is beautifully done, and the long court sequence, in which Zola is on trial for libel, is excellent. Justice and liberty are the keynotes of the film, as typified by the democratic nations, and there is an impressive ending with Anatole France proclaiming a funeral oration over Zola. But the main box-office interest will be the performance of Paul Muni in the title part. Muni is, in fact, the whole film, with the exception of one small section that Joseph Schildkraut, as Dreyfus, firmly claims for his own. Muni is superb. Every gesture, every line is put over with immense care and artistry, but whether he can draw the crowds without Rainer is another matter.

The fourth memorable film of the last quarter was *Stage Door*. It is not profound and it is scarcely very good cinema, but it is alive, well acted and efficient as only Hollywood can be. This is another of Gregory La Cava's pictures, adapted from a play. The dialogue crackles and the characters are very sharply defined. Most of the action takes place in a theatrical boarding house, crowded with girls whose every word comes over perfectly. It has the curious star combination of Ginger Rogers and Katharine Hepburn. The former puts over broad comedy without much strain, while the latter fulfils the promise of *Morning Glory*. There is also a very notable sequence leading up to a suicide. The victim is a disappointed actress, played by Andrea Leeds with a sincerity that suggests a big future, and as she walks upstairs her face is distorted by the fear of madness, hearing the ghost-like voices of the theatre. There is imagination in this sequence and brilliant photography.

An event of great importance last quarter was the presentation of the long-awaited *Marie Walewska*, in which Garbo has her first real co-star since the old Gilbert days. It is easy to play the iconoclast and say that Charles Boyer steals the picture. In this version of Napoleon's unofficial love-life it must be the Emperor who is the more important and interesting figure. Countess Walewska is not famous for conducting amazing campaigns, for rebuilding the French empire, for setting up a new form of government or for becoming master of Europe with most of its thrones peopled with relations and supporters. True all these activities of the Emperor are dismissed in a few sub-titles so that the Countess may have a chance to win her little victory over the Emperor in his capacity as a lover, but Boyer does manage to suggest something of his life beyond the bedroom; in fact he makes a remarkably close shot to what one imagines the Emperor to have been like. Lovely and gracious as the Garbo is, she cannot stand up to that sort of opposition and in the second half of the film she



The Old. *Prisoner of Zenda* 1912 *Famous Players Lasky*

comes dangerously near to being a bore. All the same the film is well worth seeing. It is lavishly produced and the first half is very good indeed, particularly the Warsaw ball sequence. But I think it is time someone made a film about Talleyrand that would clear his reputation with the cinema public for being a grotesque nincompoop.

There seems to have been a good deal of laughter last quarter. Before coming to the louder, more abdominal laughs, I must mention the quiet chuckles occasioned by *Angel*. It is not very often that we have a hand-made Lubitsch picture nowadays, and after seeing *Angel* many people said that the *maestro* was losing his grip. To my mind, *Angel* is a nice leg-pull, made with the tongue well into the cheek. The story is preposterous, all about a British diplomat who lives in a Jacobean mansion surrounded by oak panelling, grand pianos, humorous servants and Marlene Dietrich. But he can devote very little time to any of these things because the telephone will keep ringing in the middle of the night to say that Jugoslavia is not playing the game. So that the diplomat had to go to Geneva and his beautiful wife had to relieve her boredom by a trip to Paris and an adventure with a lonely Englishman. It is all so neatly worked and so delightfully ridiculous and played with just the right air of seriousness that *Angel* is a very good joke. Probably an expensive joke that will fall flat in Hull and Blackpool, but none the less good vintage Lubitsch.

There will be no difficulty in seeing the jokes in *Oh, Mr. Porter*, a good British comedy that gave Will Hay ample opportunities for his fooling. Most of it is very funny; it has pace and an hilarious finale with a decrepit railway engine, *Gladstone*, careering all over Ireland. Another very competent British picture was *Non-Stop New York*, a girl-chases-crook story that takes place mostly on a trans-atlantic air-liner. This comes into the laughter section by virtue of Master Desmond Tester, whose boy prodigy violinist is a very adult piece of acting. There was also a pleasant, if not very original, song and dance comedy from Denham called *Paradise for Two*, with Jack Hulbert pretending to be somebody he was not and Patricia Ellis doing the same thing.

A more ambitious musical was *Ali Baba Goes to Town*, with the banjo-eyed Eddie Cantor. This is his first picture since he left Goldwyn and consequently there are not so many show girls. But there is more wit than usual, and Cantor is very funny running a dream version of Baghdad, on New Deal lines. The satire on the American political scene is sharp and pointed, particularly in some of the songs, and it may not all get over with English audiences.

Leslie Howard appeared in two comedies. One, *Stand In*, was a satire on Hollywood. It started off well but half way through it developed into farce so broad that most of the satire got lost. Fantastic things do happen daily in Hollywood, but the satire is not so funny when it becomes wildly improbable and melodramatic. His other film was *It's Love I'm After*, a riotous affair of a girl's infatuation for an actor, and his attempts to debunk himself by rudeness and other methods. Eric Blore comes into his own in the picture as a gentleman's gentleman who might have been a terrible cad's cad.

The disarming Deanna Durbin followed up *Three Smart Girls* with *A Hundred Men and a Girl*, a delightful success-story of the daughter of an out-of-work musician who sings her way to fame and gets Stokowski to conduct her father's orchestra. The comedy is natural and fresh and so is the star. The other girl star—if one may so describe Shirley Temple—had two vehicles, *Wee Willie Winkie* and *Heidi*. The former was a hokum version of the Kipling story, adapted to the sex of the star and full of all the things that make strong men gurgle or gnash their teeth, with a North-west frontier setting, Shirley as her own private League of Nations and Victor McLaglen dispensing tough charm. *Heidi* had Shirley in the snows, thawing out a bewhiskered Jean Hersholt and curing a cripple girl. It was full of warm sympathy, but for some reason it left West End audiences cold.

The limit of craziness was reached in *Double Wedding* in which William Powell was made to live in a motor trailer and wear a chinchilla coat. What the characters said was not nearly so crazy as what they did, and the result was a highly entertaining picture. There was also a film called *Big City* that had some moments that were so crazy as to be quite bewildering. Frank Borzage directed, and he was obviously determined to extract the utmost whimsy out of the film and out of Luise Rainer, who played in it. Miss Rainer made the mistake of thinking she was acting in something that had the width and depth of *The Good Earth*. The result was a painful piece of over-acting. There was melodrama and slapstick as well in *Big City*, a story of rival taxi drivers and emigration problems, but at least it gave Spencer Tracy one superb moment. Or perhaps it was the other way round.

Our old friend *The Prisoner of Zenda* turned up again last quarter, a lavish re-make of the silent version with most of Hollywood's English colony in it. It was romantic and efficient, and had the curious air of unimportance that comes from make-believe. But the duel sequence in Black Michael's castle was superbly directed, set and acted. Another re-make was *Stella Dallas*, the old mother-love story that now seems a bit worn round the edges and full of false emotions and motives that take the wrong turning. It was well directed by King Vidor, and the people who made it obviously believed in it. Barbara Stanwyck played Stella with a shade too much gusto.

From the British studios came *The Return of the Scarlet Pimpernel*, a handsome charade photographed in that still, clear light that has been a feature of many Denham productions. With Hollywood making *Dead Ends* and *Zolas*, it is impossible to take the adventures of the Pimpernel very seriously. There was also a colour picture from Denham, *The Divorce of Lady X*. This was a frivolous comedy about a barrister who was forced to spend the night with a girl in a hotel and then thought he was going to be involved in a divorce suit. It was all rather self-consciously daring and the colour self-consciously glaring. Another colour film was *Vogues of 1938*. The colour was more skilfully used in this film, for it was meant to be obtrusive, since the greater part of the interest centred in a series of elaborate fashion parades.

Frank Lloyd, the director of *Cavalcade* and *Lloyds of London*, made *Wells Fargo*, shown last quarter. This had the rather curious theme of the expansion of a stage coach and express company in America during the mid-nineteenth century. The personal, or love interest, side of the story had nothing very striking in it, but the crowd scenes and big outdoor sequences were magnificently handled. The reconstruction of the American towns was particularly successful, helped by a neat trick of starting each sequence with a still and then "animating" it so as to heighten the illusion of reality.

EX LIBRIS

A few of the Quarter's Books, reviewed by PAUL ROTHA *and others*

GARBO AND THE NIGHTWATCHMEN. Assembled and Edited by Alistair Cooke. *Jonathan Cape. 7s. 6d.*

Beyond scanning the reviews in trade papers, do movie people read what is written about them and their work? Publicity departments keep large staffs cutting clippings. Back-slapping phrases are plucked from their context to puff up the ads. But does the sort of stuff of which most of this book is made up—good honest criticism—does this get to the people whose movie meddling inspires such critical labour? Did Max Schach read what John Marks wrote about *The Marriage of Corbal* in the *New Statesman*? Did Sam Goldwyn note what Don Herold said about *Kid Millions* in *Life* (that was)? Obviously not, or else half the people whose picture practice is dissected by these "night-watchmen" would never have the impertinence to make another picture.

As far as the manufacturers are concerned, my experience is that the heads and sub-heads are too busy discussing over lunch the news in that morning's trade daily, checking up on this contract and that, and who's bought who, to pay any attention to written criticism. While "Bizz Socko" holds, why should they worry? So long as the publicity department justifies its pay-checks by getting so many columns of "mention" a week, the "nightwatchmen" can go drink themselves to death.

LIMITED APPEAL

It's a sad thought, though, that movie criticism such as is in this book gets no further than clipping files and the small public of the "good" periodicals. True, Mr. Alistair Cooke's work had a wide coverage over the air and Mr. Meyer Levin writes for *Esquire*, which is read in strange places for stranger reasons, but they are the only critics of this group to reach out to more than a few thousand people—few, that is, in terms of movie audiences counting millions.

The more reason, then, to bless Mr. Cooke for having the idea of putting between covers for the first time some of the best movie criticism written since the talkies began. Bless him, doubly, for having the wit to put side by side American and British writers. For apart from the value of the reviews in themselves, this set up offers a chance which it is impossible to avoid for comparing not only differences in approach to the movies but differences in journalistic style and background.

OH, ALBION!

With the exception of Mr. Cooke himself, there can be no quibble that, as a whole, the writing capacity of Messrs. Don Herold, Meyer Levin, Otis Ferguson and Robert Forsythe, who bat for America, is of a higher order than that of Messrs. Robert Herring, John Marks and Graham Greene, who team up for Britain. (Miss Ager I leave apart; she has no comparison in England or the Empire). The point is that the Americans can be read as examples of entertaining, informative and often constructive journalism. The English, on the whole, are a dull lot. They are heavy with a hope to be thought serious. The difference is one which distinguishes so much American and English journalism. The difference, say, of a news report in the *New York Times* and its equivalent in the London *Times*.

Apart from this first distinction, the Americans give the impression that their approach results from viewing movies in a wider perspective than the English. They tie up the pictures they see with the other things of life. They see them as part of the scheme of everyday things, whereas our English writers see films as things in themselves removed from the round of daily living. Maybe this is because most of the English writers stem from backgrounds and experiences which are, to say the least, conventional. They have neither the vitality nor the gay qualities of the Americans. Most important of all, they lack human feeling. What London critic would have summed up the mechanical gadgets of Mr. Korda's *Things to Come* as did Don Herold: "And I'd like to go back to the old swimmin' hole of my boyhood and squish mud through my toes"?

The fact is that the English critics review films as they would review books, plays and the ballet. The Americans approach movies in their own terms as "movies"; no more, no less. They know and feel the things with which movies deal. They are on familiar terms with the life about which they write. Any preciosity they may have had has been drilled out of them. Significant it is that Otis Ferguson worked two years in a bowling alley, a little time selling papers and, after four years in the U.S. Navy, was paid off as a first-class seaman. Meyer Levin conducted marionette courses at the New School for Social Research, New York, after having studied under Léger in Paris. Don Herold was married at seventeen and has two daughters. They are ordinary people, these Americans, with a wide experience of the world in which they live. You may complain that they avoid æsthetic issues, forget to praise camerawork and do not think of the movies as "the cinema." You may dismiss their criticism as being cynical, smart, slick. It may be all of this: but it gets nearer to the heart of real movie than all the preambling about the "proper use of the film."

NOT DELIBERATELY UNKIND, BUT . . . !

Do not think I am deliberately unkind about our English movie critics. God knows, they have a hard, thankless job. Moreover, those whom Mr. Cooke has chosen to appear in his book are, in the main, superior to those who drearily drag out the columns of our dailies with senseless stuff to the call of the advertising manager. So little film criticism in England to-day is unfettered; so much is dictated by studio policy. Thus, only one critic in this book writes for a daily newspaper and that the most revered. The others have freer columns in the weeklies, monthlies and come-out-

when-you-can varieties. But they all have one thing in common. They are practising reviewers and not theoreticians. They are not movie makers but writers at their job of writing. Thus, when I make this comparison between the English and the American, you can take it that it is wholly a matter of approach resulting from background.

What common thing do these writers ask of the movies? By what standards are they judging the pictures they see? Each, I think, has his or her own private wishes, but one simple request is made by all—that the movies should measure up to the drama to be found in everyday life. And that is the one request which the producers are loath to grant.

There still remains the question: for whom is this criticism written? Not the producers, for they do not see it. Not the great movie audience, for they do not read it. Then it must be written for you and me and that other fellow who thinks that the movies have something. I hope this book has a wide sale. More than books about film theory, these "nightwatchmen" can increase the size of the audience who thinks about movies—as entertainment or just plain education. If you spare time to read Don Herold on *The Scoundrel*, John Marks on *The Marriage of Corbal*, Meyer Levin on *Annapolis Farewell*, Alistair Cooke on *Things to Come*, Robert Forsythe on Mae West, Graham Greene on *The Nutrition Film*, Otis Ferguson on *Fury*, and that great ironist, Cecelia Ager (in a trade paper, mark you), on Jessie Matthews—you will get a cross section of the movies as they are, and as they might be, that you will find in no other book. PAUL ROTHA

THE AFRICAN AND THE CINEMA. L. A. Notcutt and G. C. Latham. *Edinburgh House Press.* 3*s.* 6*d.*

The Field Director and the Educational Director of the Bantu Educational Cinema Experiment have joined forces to write this very full account of their two years' work.

The Bantu Experiment, as readers of SIGHT AND SOUND will remember, took its origin from a Commission of Enquiry into the effects of the copper mines of Central Africa upon native society and the work of the Christian Missions. It was financed by the Carnegie Corporation of New York and several of the industrial copper interests of Central Africa. The Experiment received help in other ways from a large number of bodies including the British Film Institute. The aims of the Experiment were fourfold:

"(1) To help the adult African to understand and to adapt himself to the conditions which are invading and threatening to overwhelm him.

(2) To reinforce the ordinary methods of the classroom and lecture hall.

(3) To conserve what is best in African traditions and culture by representing these in their proper setting as stages in the racial development and as an inheritance to be cherished with pride.

(4) To provide recreation and entertainment."

With these ideas in mind there were made altogether thirty-five films which were, with but two exceptions, educational in character. They were produced in Africa using as far as possible native labour both on the technical and on the performing side. To show the films in the course of a couple of tours, lasting in all five months, nine thousand miles were covered and the films were seen by approximately 80,000 Africans, some Europeans and a large number of Indians. In addition to these larger tours, early in 1937 two smaller ones were made in the Tanga district by a unit in charge of a young native. Another thirty-six performances were given by him.

Their experiences, both in making and exhibiting films, have led the authors to formulate certain tentative conclusions, and these for the ordinary person are the most important section of the book. Their findings bear out Professor Julian Huxley's opinion that "the film can be used constructively to aid the progress and development of primitive people". It has been found, for example, that films can be used extensively for promoting inter-racial understanding, for propaganda on various subjects, such as health and agriculture, for the promotion of trade, for missionary work and many other subjects of a generally educational character. The authors also conclude that there is need for the early establishment of control by Government in order that primitive populations may become accustomed to healthy programmes of films with some profit in them before their taste is vitiated by unsuitable films. The solution, they believe, lies in the creation of a central organisation in London working in close relationship with the British Film Institute. This central organisation's general function would be to organise the field and to co-ordinate the work of local production units.

The African and the Cinema should arouse interest in a very important matter, and one which is becoming increasingly important as the development of Africa increases. If it does so, it will have served a very useful purpose. It is not only in Africa, indeed, that the problem is urgent. The Report contains as an Appendix, a quotation from an observer of the effect of the film in India. An Indian student who in no way wished to be offensive is quoted as asking: "Sir, is it possible to find a chaste woman in the West?" In Mr. Notcutt and Mr. Latham's Report is to be found the first fumbling attempt to provide an adequate reply.

[*A leading article dealing with this subject is on page* 172].

TINPOT COUNTRY. Terence Greenidge. *The Fortune Press.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

This novel is intended as a scathing indictment of the British film industry. David Ericson, fresh from making amateur films amid the idyllic surroundings of Oxford University, becomes an assistant director in a large film studio, only to meet with shattering disillusionment, as he finds money wasted, art prostituted and commercial ethics outraged. But the industry, the author suggests, is only one institution typical of the whole of this "tinpot country". And as his hero, having violently adapted himself to the industry's base demands, cracks under the strain, so the social fabric of England cracks also, until revolution ushers in the Golden Age.

The novel which undertakes to depict in broad lines some aspect of the social scene is distinguished from the novel of character by sweeping descriptive passages supplemented by jewel-like cameos of characterisation, while the character through whose eyes the panorama is seen remains little more than a cipher. This distinction, observed by authors from Smollett to Linklater, Mr. Greenidge ignores. Though the book is supposed to provide "a marvellous account of life in an English film studio" (*vide* publishers' "blurb")

instead of scathing it with satire or horrifying us with a mass of detail, the author asks us to judge it by its effect on the mind of one idealistic adolescent. Little attempt has been made to select telling characterisations from the multitudinous denizens of the studio (what a chance was lost here!) while the reference to "the almost monotonous success of the Five Year Plans" is fit to rank with the wildest asseverations of the October Club.

The book which will set the film industry by the ears has still to be written. G.T.

ART AND PRUDENCE. Mortimer J. Adler. *Longmans, Green and Co.* $5.

Since Plato proposed to exclude drama from the state and to supervise poetry, the question of how far the state has the right to control art, and the whole subject of the relationship between art and politics generally, has been topical.

It has been brought into new prominence by the encyclical of Pope Pius XI on motion pictures.

The question goes deeper than the problems of censorship and prohibition. How far pictures have an influence on public and individual morality; how far the state is justified in controlling them; what sacrifices such control demands; the types of criticism to which art can be subjected; all these questions and others more profound have been most imperfectly understood by those who are loudest in their denunciation of the cinema.

Dr. Adler has both tried to explicate the charges against the cinema and to discover what can be said in its defence. To do so he has gone back to first principles. Taking his stand upon the dictum of Jacques Maritain: "In finding fault with a work of art, the prudent man, firmly established upon his moral virtue, has the certitude that he is defending against the artist a sacred good, the good of Man, and he looks upon the artist as a child or a madman. Perched upon his intellectual habit, the artist is certain of defending a good which is no less sacred—the good of beauty; and looks as though he were crushing the prudent man under Aristotle's maxim: *Vita quae est secundum speculationem est melior quam quae secundum hominem*," Dr. Adler analyses the problem of art versus politics in all its ramifications.

Were the contemporary problem seen not as a new one, but as a special case of the perennial problem of the arts in society, the discussion would be clarified, he maintains, by the rediscovery of principles which would expose the problem's peculiar difficulties and restrain men from a too easy solution. So he starts by examining in detail the arguments of Plato and Aristotle, the primary sources, of St. Thomas Aquinas and Bossuet, the exponents of these two schools in the light of Christianity, and of Rousseau and John Dewey, their exponents in the light of democracy. Then he proceeds to the contemporary problem. Certain people claim to know that there is something bad, wrong, undesirable about motion pictures at the present time and that such deficiencies or evils can be remedied or eliminated. Further they must claim to know that the course of action they propose will be efficient in so doing.

Dr. Adler examines first the claims against the cinema. They are: (1) That some pictures are offensive, immoral or obscene; (2) That they influence the behaviour of adults so as to corrupt public manners, and individual moral character; (3) That films are one of the causes of adult criminality; (4) That they have a number of bad effects on children, injuring health, corrupting moral character, being the source of false notions, and one of the causes of juvenile delinquency.

The third section of his book is devoted to an examination of the evidence as to the effect of films on character. He concludes that scientific research has not succeeded in confirming any of the moral charges made against the cinema (without drawing the conclusion that the charges are therefore false). He also finds that most of those making broad charges against the cinema do so without any foundations for their allegations, and recalls that the Indian Cinematograph Committee had the same experience.

Finally, he considers movies as a fine art. It is necessary to apply the distinctions which have been made to the cinema as a fine art because so many confusions prevail. If the principles of æsthetic criticism were understood, if moral and technical criteria were separated, he concludes, the prudent man would be aided in confining himself to purely political judgments, and a higher standard of popular taste cultivated. Criticism in the field of the novel is bad, but that in the field of the cinema is far worse. The technique of the motion picture is vastly superior to that of its critical commentators. Only by cultivating a critical audience, he ends, will the film be able to reach the maturity of its own possible perfection.

The treatise is a most scholarly one. As he needs must in a work of this sort, the writer assumes that nothing is known: this leads to the restatement of much generally known material; this, and the extremely detailed and carefully documented nature of the work—it runs to 215,000 words plus 33,000 words of notes—will deter the general reader, but no one who is concerned with the moral effects of films or with censorship, can afford to ignore it. The chapters on the scientific investigation of the influence of the film alone would make it indispensable. The practical film-worker, too, can find much wisdom in the section on the film as art, especially in the chapter on technique. G. R. R. TAYLOR

COLOURED LIGHT. A. B. Klein, M.B.E. Third edition, enlarged, of *Colour-Music. Technical Press, Ltd.* 30*s.*

Satan, in addition to finding business for idle hands, runs a profitable side-line finding subjects of speculation and invention for idle minds. Occasionally, however, his plans go astray and the bemused explorer, instead of perishing miserably in an arid desert, stumbles upon a fertile track hitherto concealed from the eyes of mankind.

Let us hope that those who interest themselves in the problem of colour-music may turn out to be among these lucky ones. At any rate, such of them as prefer to guide their footsteps by the use of a comprehensive itinerary cannot do better than obtain this new and enlarged edition of Major Adrian Klein's *Colour-Music*. It comes within the scope of this publication because the film, which is always annexing to itself new territory, has recently staked out a claim on the territory of colour-music. Len Lye's animated jazz-patterns, adulterated though they are with lettering and representation of objects, clearly belong to this region of giddy fantasy. In fact they indicate that the film is the most efficient instrument for producing complicated sequences of colour and pattern effect in synchronisation with music, provided that the composer is willing to limit the field of his efforts to the area of a cinema screen.

CINEMA PESTS

We have all suffered from the evils described by ERNEST DYER *in this entertaining article, but few of us would deal with them so drastically!*

IN ONE AND the same evening recently, I heard Paderewski booed in one cinema and Bergner barracked in another. Both were first-run cinemas in the centre of a large provincial city.

The hooting of Paderewski was, of course, inexcusable hooliganism; the work of a few louts who wished to express their disapproval of *Moonlight Sonata* as entertainment. The extraordinary thing to me was that they remained quiet during the story part of the film, which Heaven knows deserved hooting, and reserved their catcalls for the actual playing of the dear old man himself. This was on Monday. On succeeding evenings the news about the film had spread round the back streets from which this hall derives part of its clientele, and audiences were left to enjoy Paderewski's playing in relative peace. Of course, the usual clamour of conversation, cellophane wrappings, exits and entrances and the traffic and mart of the cigarette sellers went on merrily throughout the performance, but only a spoil-sport could take exception to that.

At the second cinema, on the other hand, the clamour increased during the week until by Saturday the front stalls were "counting out" Miss Bergner throughout her most emotional scene and declaring in unison "We want Claudette". (*I Met Him in Paris*, with the charming Miss Colbert, was the other feature.)

The incidents have given rise to numerous local discussions on the manners of cinema-goers. Intolerable, say some, for these people to interfere with our enjoyment in the presence of a great artist like Bergner. What do you expect, say others, when you play two such dissimilar films side by side—and in a hall which has vitiated the taste of its regular patrons by intensive courses of dance bands and vaudeville. But you cannot put quite beyond the pale people of such fundamentally sound taste as to "want Claudette".

"UNLADYLIKE" MISS BERGNER

So far as *Dreaming Lips* is concerned I believe the truth to lie near the view expressed by a correspondent in the Tyneside Film Society's programme who, doubting the power of the T.F.S. to discourage such jeering, says: "probably most of its members were just as embarrassed, though not so vocal, as the front stalls. Here was a 'triangle' story which didn't behave as such stories should. It was damnably ill-bred of Miss Bergner to be so unladylike: she suggested all the animal ecstasy, the cruelty and the possessiveness, the childishness, of human passion. She should have known that we all like to see love-making on the screen (however superior we may be), but it must be something entirely different from the thing as we know it: it can be idealised, conventionalised, satirised, or what you will, but we don't want our masks vicariously torn from our faces. No wonder the front stalls preferred Claudette.

"To defend *Dreaming Lips* is like defending Swift when he had forgotten the last shred of his manners. Miss Bergner drew a portrait that was uncomfortably accurate, and laughter is the easiest method of repudiation. For her performance, the film is a major work. D. H. Lawrence would have loved it."

I may record that when I first saw *Dreaming Lips* at a rehearsal—virtually alone in the theatre—I was completely held by it. It was only when I saw it again—or, rather, saw such of it as remained after the renters' cuts—and found myself amongst a hostile audience, that I felt any embarrassment.

SHOOT THEM!

To my mind this frank expression of criticism by an audience is a thousand per cent healthier than the conversationed apathy of the well-bred. For the signs are still discouraging for those who hope to see films treated with the respect due to works of art. (And it is only with films worthy of respect that the rest of this article deals.) Possibly the speediest method of effecting reform would be to present each member of the audience with an efficiently-silenced revolver as he bought his ticket. To prevent indiscriminate damage to the apparatus during the showing of Bobby Breen, Dick Powell and R. E. Jeffrey, it would be necessary to place the screen itself strictly out of bounds. But the following would be fair game:

1. Neighbours with paper parcels;
2. Ditto with noisy cigarette and chocolate wrappings;
3. Ditto indulging in persistent conversation (*a*) about the plot (*b*) about the hero (*c*) about anything else ;
4. Usherettes who giggle and talk at the back of the circle; 5. Ditto who shine lights into your face.

(The removal of corpses would be permitted only at the end of the film.) We could then, I feel sure, rely upon the competitive spirit so strong amongst managers to organise measures to keep the mortality figure for their halls at the lowest possible. These measures might include:

1. More conveniently placed free cloakrooms and persuasion to use them;
2. Instructions to patrons to remove cellophane wrappings from their provisions before entering the auditorium;
3. Absolute prohibition of paper-bag meals (cakes, toffee or chips) within the precincts;
4. Instructions to chocolate-sellers with illuminated trays to confine their ministrations to the intervals (in some halls they have the nerve to come and flash their damnable lights off and on under your very nose);
5. University extension course for usherettes in the correct manipulation of torches.

About 5 a few things may be said. As I go from hall to hall I notice (*a*) that the angle of the main beam varies from a discreet degree or so to an outrageous 30 degrees; (*b*) that

some torches have a subsidiary beam with an angle as great as 150 degrees; (*c*) that sometimes the light source is concealed from lateral view; in others it projects bulbously. Some of the usherettes steadily and unobtrusively illuminate the ground immediately before your feet, but others station themselves afar off and use the torch as a kind of signal to beckon you down the gangway, employing a straight up-and-down motion for the first half of the passage and then a right-angled flick to indicate the row. A good attendant can get in a round score of flashes before you are settled, and can bring herself to the notice of everyone in the cinema behind you.

CONTRASTING EVILS

It is a nice point whether it is better to be led *back* to your seats than to be led forward. If you are led back those already seated are spared being hit in the eye by the torch; but as countervailing evils they may have to endure (*a*) your bulk interposing more effectively 'twixt them and the screen; (*b*) light entering the auditorium whenever a forward-placed door is opened (and I know cinemas with frontal entrances and no screening of lights whatever). Such problems might appropriately be referred to one of the technical sub-committees of the British Film Institute.

But so far our revolvers have not dealt with the biggest problem of all—the problems of the people for whom these torches and these torch-bearers minister, the people who arrive after the film has started, force us uncomfortably to our toes, and let down their plush seats with a bang. What is perhaps more serious than the actual interruption is the fact that scenes on the screen, which may be deeply moving to those who have seen the films from the beginning, have no such significance to the late-comers, who do not therefore feel guilty of any discourtesy in making audible comments and are unaware how infuriating such comments may be to their neighbours. Until the practice of continuous admission is given up, there is little hope for intelligent cinema. A film needs seeing from the beginning as much as a play does. We should be surprised if we heard of people seeing Act 3 of a play before Act 1. It is time that we recognised such conduct to be equally unintelligent in the cinema.

It is too much to hope that this system will be abandoned in the immediate future. But two things might mitigate its evils. One is that it should be compulsory for the actual times of screening to be included in advertisements. The second is that admission should be restricted during certain scenes. I had the experience recently in a big London cinema of watching the news-reel of the Two Minutes Silence in Whitehall while a young man and his girl friend who had just come in and were about to pass along the row at the end of which I sat, negotiated noisily in the gangway for chocolates. And all of us have been shaken out of the mood of a scene by similar interruptions in fiction films. For it usually happens that a director deliberately places his tenser scenes against a background of silence.

UNFAIR

How unfair this business is to the film was brought home to me most vividly some time back when I went to see a film that I had watched in production. I had spent a whole day in the studio. I had seen the care spent in preparation, in adjustment of lighting, in rehearsal. I had seen scenes shot seven and eight times until they were considered satisfactory. I had seen scores of people, of fine sensibility many of them, straining every nerve that the shots should be good. When the sequence was reached in the cinema I had to stand while two parcel-laden incomers clambered past me to their seats. By the time I was able to concentrate on the film again the sequence was over. A day's work wasted, so far as I and my neighbours were concerned. Every day's work on a film is wasted for some members of the audience. Now, when I go to a studio and watch some scene being shot, everyone tense with expectation, I try to visualise it as it might appear with someone blundering past me.

One way in which we can ourselves control admissions during a film is by controlling our own exits. If we must leave before the end let us at least do it at the end of a sequence. But if possible let us wait until the film is over before we free our seats. Many people seem to think that if they sit through any part of a film a second time that they are guilty of defrauding the management. Upon such delicate scruples we must urge a higher duty.

The endings of many films are ruined by stupid exhibiting practices. One is to flood the screen slowly with colours from the floats during the final shots. The effect is fatal. The first flush of magenta is the signal for a wild dive for coats and hats. Another is the fallacy of the continuous screen. Some projectionists hold that the screen should never be "dead" for a second; that you should snap straight from one film into the next without pause. How the maxim works out in practice may be illustrated from a programme I once saw that included *Things to Come*. This film ends, you may recall, by Cabal pointing to the stars and propounding the vast question, "Which shall it be? It is that—or this. All the universe—or nothingness. . . . Which shall it be?" And the figures of the men fade on the screen while other voices take up the question, "Which shall it be?", and repeat it after the screen has emptied. But this screen did not empty. As soon as ever Cabal and his stars had faded a slide flashed on, "Ices, 3*d*. Lemonade, 2*d*." "Which shall it be?" thundered Mr. Bliss's choir. "Which shall it be?"

IN MEMORIAM

The death of Mr. William Vinten robs the engineering side of the film industry of one of its most outstanding figures.

He combined the highest engineering capacities—an instinct for the right solution of a problem and an infinite capacity for concentration—with a quixotic generosity to any person whom he felt to have the welfare of cinematography at heart.

He was among the leaders of those who have pegged out a firm claim for the use of British apparatus in every quarter of the globe, and he accomplished this without exaggerated publicity by the simple method of putting into the articles which he sold first-class design, first-class material and first-class workmanship.

An opponent of muddle in any form he took a leading part in every move towards standardisation.

His factory in North London stands as the best memorial to one who from the very beginning of his career knew what he aimed at, and, overcoming all difficulties, finally achieved the success which he so well deserved. H. D. W.

HONOURABLE MOVIE-MAKERS

AKIRA IWASAKI, *in this article abridged by permission from the Japanese Cinema Year Book, describes how film making has developed in the oldest Empire in the World*

EDISON'S "VITASCOPE" and Lumiere's "Cinematographe" were introduced into Japan almost simultaneously in 1896. It was not until 1912, however, that any event of historical importance took place. In that year Nikkatsu (the Nippon Motion Picture Company), the first Japanese film trust, was organised. Between 1907 and 1910 a few dozen dramatic pieces, with simple plots, had been produced, by several small companies, and some of them achieved a certain amount of success. But they were all produced with very limited capital and the technique was exceedingly clumsy. Establishing studios in Tokyo and Kyoto, which since 1905 and to this day have been the centres of the Japanese industry, Nikkatsu started on an active career of film production. The Tokyo studio concentrated on the *Gendai-geki* or contemporary plays, depicting various phases and problems of Japan's contemporary life, whereas *Jidai-geki*, or historical plays, were produced in the Kyoto studio.

The characteristic feature of the screen of those days was its close relation to the stage, or rather its subordination to it. All the screen stars were temporarily hired from the stage. There was no such thing as a scenario, and there was no difference between acting before an audience and acting in front of a camera. Moreover, an interpreter or a group of interpreters sat beside the screen and recited the dialogue with a great deal of dramatic elocution. The natural result was that the movie-theatre was regarded as a cheaper substitute for the play-theatre, and the audience consisted mainly of children and uneducated adults.

INFLUENCE OF THE GREAT WAR

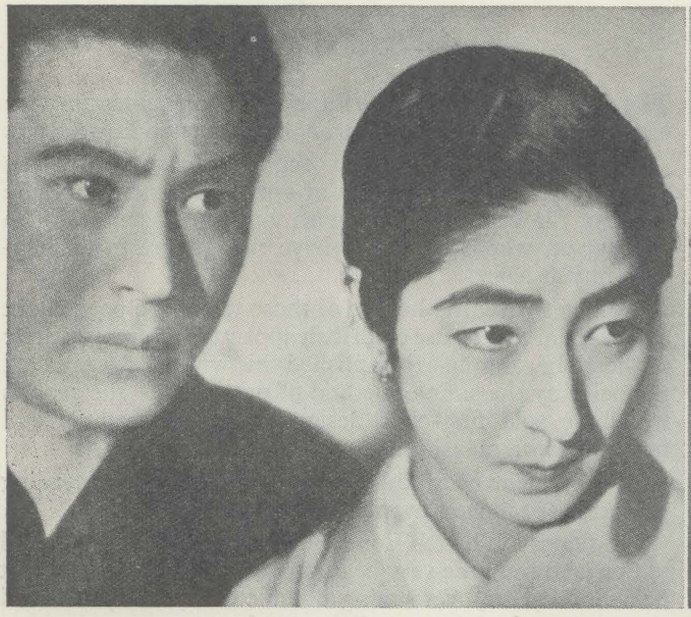
The Great War brought about a revolution in all Japanese industries. The war-time prosperity that favoured Japanese capitalism enlivened investments in the film industry, and raised the standard of living of the people. Several new companies came into being, and the people called for more and better motion pictures. By the early twenties the popularity of the screen completely overshadowed traditional forms of amusement, and the pictures became the most fundamental form of entertainment in the life of the people.

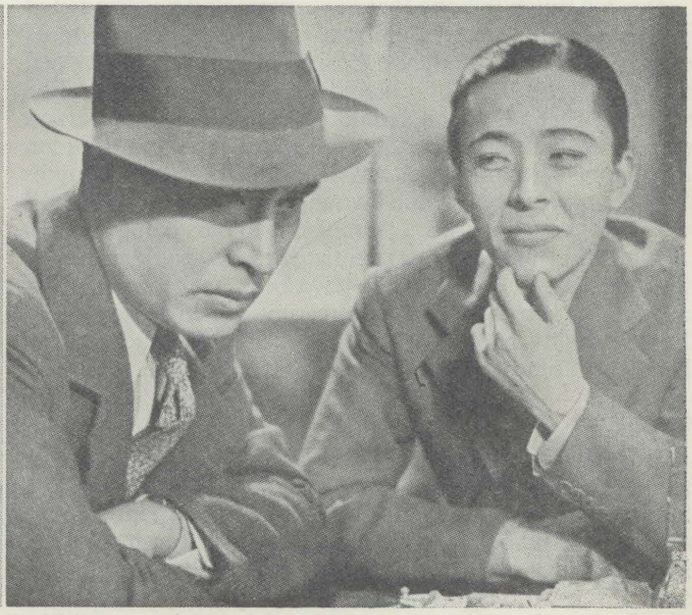
Another significant aftermath of the war was the temporary depression of European movies and the ascendancy of American screen art. The Japanese cinema came to hail the American film as its new and worthy ideal. The movie-theatres that had featured only European movies before the war were now monopolised by the American. The American cinema had already produced such great artists as Griffith and Chaplin, and had found the secret of selling speedy and lively stories with a purely cinematographic technique. The majority of the pioneers in the Japanese film industry were either technicians who had been to Hollywood or else their pupils. American imitation is to this day one of the essential features of Japanese movies.

FOUNDATIONS OF JAPANESE CINEMA

At this time, also, young intellectuals began to take a keen interest in the cinema, and a group of talented novelists, playwrights, stage-directors and stage actors, seeing in it abundant possibilities as an art form, turned to the cinema as a profession. By their work they put an end to the old Japanese cinema, which had been no more than a hybrid product of the traditional Japanese theatre, and laid secure foundations for a new Japanese photo-play.

Indeed, the founding in 1920 of Taikatsu (the Taishō





Motion Picture Company and Shōchiku Kinema Company) while it may be regarded, economically, as a reflection of post-war capitalism, is also a reflection of the intellectuals' active participation in the cinema. For instance, Taikatsu made a contract with Junishirō Tanizaki, who was then the most promising novelist of the coming generation, and is now one of the veterans of literary circles. And when Shōchiku, the dominant and highly capitalised company in the theatrical world, decided to enter the film industry it invited Kaoru Osanui, the most active stage-director of the time, to organise an Institute for Screen Art Research, to train future directors and actors. As a result of this movement the cultural level of Japanese films was heightened considerably. But ambitious, high-brow products did not prove to be financially successful, and the producers retired to the safe routine of turning out pictures that more or less suited the taste of the common people. These were pictures of cheap sentimentalism, unintelligent pictures whose business was to inspire sweet ecstasies and longings in the hearts of sentimental girls. They fitted in perfectly, however, with the depressed spirit and gloomy life of the *bourgeoisie* of the time. Shōchiku's change of policy proved very wise—as far as money was concerned—and the company, which quickly absorbed Taikatsu, is still to-day one of the two major film combines.

THE EARTHQUAKE

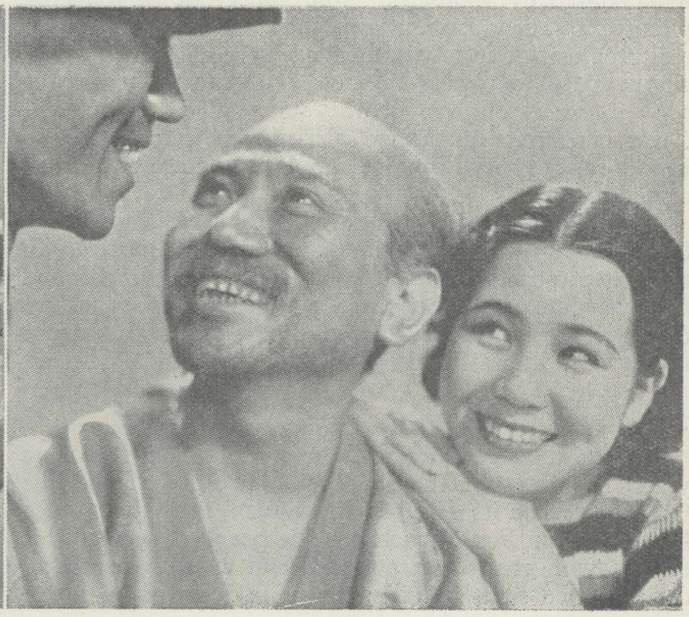
The Great Earthquake of September, 1923, ruined much of the film industry as well as other industries, throwing it for a time into a state of chaos. Both Nikkatsu and Shōchiku were prostrated by the stroke. All the studios in Tokyo were demolished, and were replaced by new ones in Kyoto, and as a result the centre of the film industry was largely shifted to Kyoto.

The changes brought about by the Great Earthquake were not merely geographical. It also caused an essential revolution in Japanese cinemas. It put an end to the older, unnaturally "theatrical" motion picture art which had been in a gradual course of decline, and to the custom, derived from the stage, whereby female roles were played by men. But more important was the deep psychological effect of the Earthquake on the outlook of the entire Japanese people. The spirit of the Japanese, already labouring under economic depression, was keenly hurt by this great shock and the subsequent hardships. Although considerable energy was displayed, inspired by the noble aim of restoring the city of Tokyo and Japan in general, the pessimism shared by the majority led to a decadent nihilistic outlook or else to positive criticism of the society in which they lived—to Marxism. These two tendencies are clearly manifest in the films of the period.

TWO OPPOSING THEORIES

In the screen art of Japan there had long been two fundamentally different types—*Gendai-geki* (contemporary) and *Jidai-geki* (historical). This classification is not based merely on the chronological difference in the subject-matter. The two categories are conceived within two entirely opposing systems, have different forms of expression, and reflect different psycho-ideologies. The *Jidai-geki* developed within a peculiarly Japanese pattern. It started from the *Kabuki*—or more strictly, from a cheap and disreputable imitation of it—and developed as a burlesque, *Katau-geki* (or combat scenes), mainly for the amusement of children. But it met with great acclamation from the lower stratum of movie-fans, and the actors who took the roles of the heroes of the *Kabuki* stage were greeted with the heartiest of applause. This popularity may be compared with that of the American comic shorts, "Westerns" and the now old-fashioned serials. The subject matter of the films was stupid and quite worthless, but with the maximum use of tricks peculiar to the screen, rather childish thrills and speedy tempo, they proved to be popular and showed the way to purely cinematic creation.

The absurd and grotesque *Katsu-geki* went out of fashion and was replaced by a new type called *Ken-geki*, or sword-plays, which dealt with the strife and bloodshed of knighthood in an heroic and exciting way. These plays from 1924 to 1927 almost entirely monopolised the Japanese screen. They fitted in perfectly with the feudalistic sentiments still left in the hearts of the people, and they possessed visual charm as dynamic spectacles. But while the *Ken-geki* films were fundamentally a product of the feudalistic psychology of previous ages, they were no less a reflection of the



psychology of the *bourgeoisie*, and they were strongly characterised by what might be defined as sentimental nihilism. While depending upon the historical past for their stories, they were all unfeignedly expressions of a omit most modern psychological type. In all of them there was evident revolt against the sufferings of life, a burning hatred of social evils. But those who revolted and hated simply clamoured in despair, not knowing exactly where their anger should be directed. They revolted in blind despair until they sank in the depths of nihilism. In this tragedy, however, there was felt a pulse of the life that was to come.

INFLUENCE OF COMMUNISM

The life that came next to the Japanese screen was a leftist development of the *Gendai-geki*, or contemporary, type of film. The proletariat and *petit bourgeoisie* were awakened for the first time by the poverty and unemployment of the post-earthquake depression to a Marxist class-consciousness. Communism, as a political and social practice, appeared and quickly gained influence. A proletarian culture was conceived and developed among the progressive intelligentsia and began to take deep root among the masses. Proletarian literature came to occupy a dominant position even in *bourgeoisie* journalism, and the leftist theatre, depending on that large class which consisted of workers and the *petit bourgeois*, proved even a big business success. This led, naturally enough, to the birth of leftist films. They were produced at capitalist studios purely as money-making commodities. Naturally they were not truly proletarian works. But individual films did present the position of the working class and its radical claims, and accused the capitalist system of its many evils and injustices. For, whatever the motive of the producers, many artists—both scenario-writers and directors—had been affected by current thought and subscribed to radical views.

QUICKLY FOLLOWED BY CENSORSHIP

Censorship in a capitalist society did not remain long oblivious of its duty. When many of the leftist films were badly cut or totally banned, the cinema industrialists stopped production and the leftist films disappeared. As a reaction to the radical movement, the "box-office" was monopolised by "nonsense" stuff and erotic or romantic pictures. But conscientious artists did not wish to leave the real problems of society untouched. Some of them took the alternative of depicting in a realistic way the miserable *petit bourgeois* outlook of the unemployed and wage-slaves, euphemistically called salaried men. Others chose to handle serious social problems under the guise of satirical comedies.

It only remains to record the important influence which Soviet movies had at this time upon Japanese movies. On account of strict censorship, only a very few films found their way into Japan. But these few excellent films, such as *Storm over Asia*, *General Line* and *Turksib* made a tremendously deep impression in Japan.

THE COMING OF SOUND

In 1926 the screen found its tongue. It took three long years, however, for the sound film to cross the Pacific Ocean. It made its debut in May, 1929, in the form of a few reels from Fox-Movietone. The people welcomed this miracle with greatest enthusiasm, and by 1930 nearly all the imported films publicly shown in Japan were sound films. Silent pictures gradually came to be regarded as no longer worthy of the name of cinema. The Japanese film, too, had to find its tongue so that theatres might not be all empty.

In 1931, after a number of unsatisfactory attempts, Shochiku succeeded in producing the country's first creditable sound film. Nikkatsu, the great rival of Shochiku, which was rather late in taking sound seriously, joined forces with Western Electric. The J.O. Studio (of whose founding mention will be made later) adopted the R.C.A. system. In addition, Japanese technicians invented some sound systems, of which P.C.L. (Photo Chemical Laboratory) and Tsuchihashi System (adopted by Shochiku) are the outstanding achievements. But the change-over to sound was not effected simply or quickly. The greatest difficulty was the lack of sufficient capital. The Japanese film industry had been begun by more or less private companies with limited capital, and although it had made rapid progress it had not gone beyond the stage of small-capital enterprise. Furthermore, from 1930 to 1932, the Japanese industry was menaced by a succession of general economic panics; many independent smaller productions collapsed; second-class studios were closed everywhere; non-payment and reduction of salaries caused frequent strikes. The appearance of the talkies at this juncture was serious for the film industrialists, and it promoted the decline of small companies and the organisation of powerful trusts. Thus

JAPAN IS the major film producing country in the world after America. According to figures prepared by the United States Department of Commerce and published in the last issue of SIGHT AND SOUND, Japan produced 496 feature films during 1936 as compared with 217 produced by Great Britiain. According to the International Cinema Association of Japan, 558 feature films were produced by Japan in 1936; of these

137 were silent;
39 were partly talkies;
82 were sound, and
300 were "talkie and sound."

These films were produced by 11 companies, as follows: *Daito, 109; Irie, 3; Zensko, 17; J.O., 3; Koyokuto, 31; Makino, 68; *Nikkatsu (and its associated companies), 95; *Shinko (and its associated companies), 104; *Shochiku, 96; Daiichi, 11; P.C.L., 23.

* (Controlled by Shochiku.)

Films imported into Japan totalled 341. Of these the U.S.A. contributed 270; Germany, 25; France, 23; England, 14; other countries, 9.

There are 1,627 cinemas in Japan, of which 1,368 are equipped with sound. Out of these, 1,130 cinemas showed Japanese films exclusively, 63 showed foreign films exclusively and 433 showed both Japanese and foreign pictures. Attendances averaged 6,000,000 a week out of a population of approximately 90,000,000, compared with Great Britain's 20,000,000 a week out of a population of 43,000,000.

sound played an important part in transforming the organisation of the film industry in Japan, as in America and Europe.

MODERN DEVELOPMENTS

The most striking result was the enormous growth of the Shochiku trust, which looked at one time as if it might completely monopolise the Japanese screen. But the tendency toward highly capitalised combines drew powerful financiers and capitalists in other industries into the film industry, and now that the cinema had been proved an object for secure and profitable investment, a few new enterprises arose, with solid financial backing, to dispute Shochiku's position. The P.C.L. with its P.C.L. sound system, organised in 1933, was financed by some brewers and publishers. The J.O. Studio was founded on the investment of a big foreign-trader, and casting in their lot with Toho, a company directed by the great financier, Mr. Ishizo Kobayashi, the J.O. Studio and P.C.L. formed the second great trust. Nikkatsu, a giant in the past, was reduced to inactivity, and in 1936 it came under the direct control of Shochiku.

These disintegrations and reorganisations supplied the energy necessary for the development of Japanese talkies. By 1934-35, the leading screen artists of the silent film age had proved themselves equally capable in sound films; Yasujiro Shimazu, Mikio Narusé, Mansaku Itami, Sadao Yamanaka, Heinosuké Gosho, and others produced superior works. Shimazu's *Our Neighbour Yayechan* (Shochiku, 1934), *The Woman of that Night* (Shochiku, 1934) Narusé's *My Wife is Like a Rose* (P.C.L., 1935), Itami's *Chuji Makes a Name* (Shinko, 1935), Yamanaka's *The Tattooed Man of the Street* (Nikkatsu, 1935)—all these may not be regarded as highest achievements either in theme or form, but they possessed freshness and caused favourable reactions, especially among the upper classes of cinema-goers.

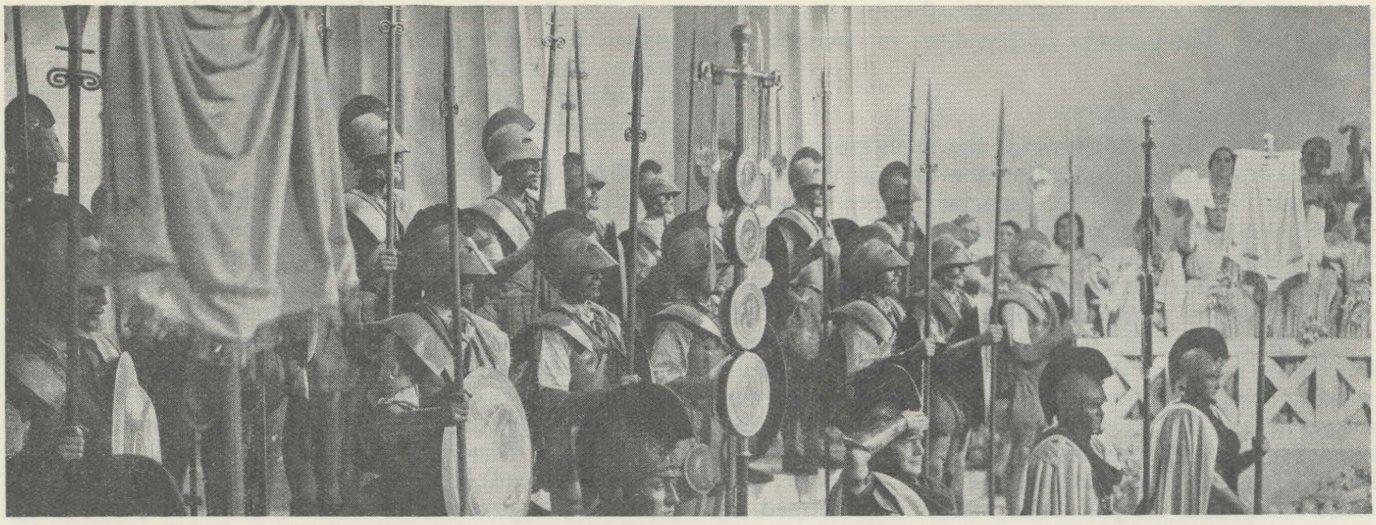
The artistic advancement of the film is always relative to and inseparable from the development of the appreciative ability of the audience. Since the appearance of talkies, the quality of our movie-fans has improved rapidly, and fairly artistic demands are being made of the screen. Some really excellent films have been produced, and the intellectuals have come to take interest in Japanese films. This, in turn, has helped to raise the intellectual and artistic level of Japanese film art, and again, to please and attract intellectual cinema-fans.

LITERARY INFLUENCE

An important factor in recent improvement in Japanese films has been the great help rendered to the screen by Japanese literature. The majority of better films of recent years have been inspired by literary masterpieces. Intellectual and artistic works by leading authors have been used as originals, and some of the films have been so well produced that their artistic value has been just as high as that of the original literary works. *All Living Things* (Shochiku, 1934), directed by Heinosuké Gosho, *Okoto and Sasuke* (Shochiku, 1935), *The Family Conference* (Shochiku, 1936), by Yasujiro Shimazu, *Theatre of Life* (Nikkatsu, 1936), *Akanishi Kakita* (Nikkatsu, 1936), by Mansaku Itami, *Brother and Sister* (P.C.L., 1936), by Sotoji Kimura—all these are screen versions respectively of representative pieces of contemporary Japanese literature by Yuzo Yamamoto, Jun ichiro Tanisaki, Riichi Tokomitsu, Shiro Ozaki, Naoya Shiga, Saisei Muro. Side by side with these original screen plays have made considerable progress. The year 1936 produced some truly worth-while works in this group, which described the gloomy, depressing, real life of the humdrum middle-class and proletariat, and their sturdy realism is a sufficient warrant for the future possibilities of Japanese screen art. They include *The Only Son* (Shochiku, 1936), a screen play by Yasujiro Ozu and directed by himself, and particularly *Naniwa Elegy* (Daiichi Eiga, 1936) and *Sisters of Gion* (Daiichi Eiga, 1936), screen plays by Kenji Mizoguchi and also directed by himself.

In the history of the Japanese cinema, 1936 may be regarded as having been the richest in its artistic harvest and the highest in importance. The degree and tempo of artistic progress have steadily increased during the short history of the Japanese film, and we may not be guilty of too great an optimism if we predict its attaining to the level of highest international standards in the very near future.

[*Photographs are reproduced from recent Japanese films.*]



Amphitryon *A Universum Film*

AUTOCRACY v. DEMOCRACY

Continental Films reviewed by ARTHUR VESSELO

THE TIME may not be far off when we shall have to consider re-titling this section of SIGHT AND SOUND; when the political diseases of Europe will have become so widespread that we shall feel unjustified in maintaining longer the distinction between "Continental" and "English-speaking" films, and turn instead to a contrast of "authoritarian" and "democratic" films. What the effect will then be on the more rabid Continental cliques over here it is difficult to say.

Meanwhile the appearance in this country of, say, a German film, without a more or less evident propagandist basis, is so much of a rarity as to make one search for implications beneath the surface. Wolfgang Liebeneiner's *Monica and Martin* is not on the face of it a propagandist piece, and indeed the propaganda which has found its way in is probably no more than the normal infiltration into an American film, though it be of a different kind. This light romantic comedy of an unworldly young painter who, so far from being unable to command success, positively rejects it because he does not think his work sufficiently mature, is derived from a stage-play whose form it has not entirely lost. Assuming the possible existence of such a character, the consequences, revolving chiefly around the subterfuges of his creditor-harassed wife, who saves her own and her husband's worldly bacon by selling his pictures, with immediate acclaim, under her signature, are comparatively credible and quite humorous. The searcher after implications will observe the passage where the art-dealer (something of a Fuehrer in his own sphere) rejects, fleetingly but emphatically, the endeavours of modernism; and will doubtless attribute to a like ideological source the simple view of the artist as an irresponsible child, together with the equally simple idea that creative ability and material rewards—or at least, one presumes, in a properly-disciplined State—need but the slightest fillip of events to unite them. For the rest, the film draws our notice mainly for Viktor de Kowa's cleverly-judged portrayal of an eccentric and ragamuffin genius.

Hardly the shallowest of underground burrowings is necessary for the disinterment of a political impulse in *Lo Squadrone Bianco*, our first sample of the Americanised technical powers of Italy's huge new cinema city. Here is a film of resplendent heroics, with affiliations to *Bengal Lancer* and even more to *La Bandera*; providing, as desert sands and outposts of Empire might be counted on to do, an admirable trial-course for pure technique. Photography, certainly, makes the very most of its guaranteed-real Libyan exteriors—men marching, hordes of camels stalking over parched wastes, under heated skies, while the camera-lens hovers to record dexterously every refinement of light against shade. Nevertheless, behind these outward elaborations is little more than a flourish of ghostly trumpets, a sermon of empty sounds. We are given ultimately to understand that the central figure has found spiritual ennoblement, casting off beyond return the softening influences of civilisation (as represented, apparently, by illicit love and symphony concerts); but if one inquires how this has come about, the answer seems to be—by the stoical leading of completely indistinguishable groups of natives one against another, for a purpose so profound in its heroism and dignity that it is never even faintly explained.

Some light on what is conceivably the true meaning of Imperialist expansion is thrown, as it happens, by another Italian film, *Path of the Heroes*, exhibited by the Film Society specially intercut with sections of a Russian film named more pointedly, if less sensationally, *Abyssinia*. These two films (shown under the general title *Record of War*) offer opposed views of an all too actual war of conquest, and their splitting-up and dovetailing together, parallel sequence against parallel sequence, gives to each a heightened significance. In each case the war proper is left to the later stages, but while the Russian introduction is mostly a descriptive account of the country and its inhabitants and institutions, the Italian one is occupied exclusively with the exultant setting in motion of the engines of war—over, it may be inferred, a considerable period of time. This difference in attitude is typical. Technically, neither film is above the ordinary, and although the Italian is said to have been made under vastly

more favourable conditions than the other, it remains fundamentally prosaic of execution; the Russian, whatever its defects, has at least the advantage of a more intimate and personal approach, with less insistence on mass organisation. The method adopted by the Film Society, with its reduplicated building-up, makes unavoidably for a certain added monotony; but it is the content alone which matters finally, and other things fade from sight, particularly in the contrasted climaxes of slaughter and raucous triumph. Little enough resemblance here in sum to the manufactured vanities of *Lo Squadrone Bianco*, which discreetly finds no place for reckless air attacks, gas warfare, and the employment of all the monstrous destructive forces of a European power against the poverty-stricken defences of a backward race. Yet somehow the deed itself is not so sinister as the bombastic appraisal of the deed, as in the twice-translated emphasis, in *Path of the Heroes*, on "civilising missions" and "places in the sun", with a surrounding host of sentiments of the same hackneyed rhetorical colour. Further, the concluding scenes of Roman holiday, the wild celebrations of victory in the streets at night, intensified by the thunderous declamatory gymnastics of a Duce shrouded aptly in physical as well as spiritual gloom, constitute an oppressive indictment asking but little external aid.

In Raizman's *The Last Night*, a twentieth-anniversary piece recalling events of the October Revolution, Soviet Russia contributes in other terms to the Film Society bag. The place of the action is Moscow, the time the last night under the old régime; the method characteristically Russian, in presenting not fiction heavily adulterated with propaganda, but propaganda slightly stirred up with fiction, Two families, proletarian and bourgeois respectively. epitomise the struggle, and their interrelationships include a Montague-Capulet love-affair with a revised moral. The worker-Romeo falls, while his Juliet lives to betray his memory; bourgeois father kills proletarian father in a mad rage; and the feud of houses, here but an item in a far wider feud, ends in blood and bitterness where it began. Bolshevism conquers, and in that victory the problems of individuals are sunk.

Present-day Soviet films have evolved their own conventions of theme and structure, differing in various key-respects from those of the earlier Eisenstein-Pudovkin school; such that an analysis of *The Last Night* must fix on numerous points previously noted, for example, in *Generation of Conquerors*. Specific "montage" has been subdued to the claims of dialogue—masses of dialogue, directly synchronised—and at the same time the propagandist outlook on the world beyond Communism's immediate borders has shifted more towards the normal. Capitalists and reactionaries are still in the main strong poison, but they no longer partake of the grotesque pig-faced villainy of a decade ago: they are of human shape, and the stage on which they move, its settings and atmosphere, are reconstructed with excellent faithfulness to detail. Here are also effective elements of pure comic relief, centring in a non-party character. Tempo, however, is still elaborately formalised, alternating sharply between extremes of static and dynamic; and the grand climax where, after long suspense, the newly-arrived reactionary troops are revealed, amid rejoicing, as converts to the Cause, is as entirely predictable of outcome as the old to-do with tractors under the sky.

There is at any rate one major producing-country on the Continent—and that the chief one internationally, France—which remains in the democratic fold. From her we receive our regular quarterly batch of films, including the almost as regular Duvivier and a Renoir. It was Jean Renoir who directed the Communist *La Vie Est à Nous*; and since his *Underworld* is a Maxim Gorki adaptation dealing with conditions in pre-Revolution Russia, it may be treated fittingly next.

Underworld paints a sincere and depressing picture of existence in a doss-house, of human beings dragging out their days in animal squalor with only death and violence to break the tedium. There is a plot about a man and a

Un Carnet De Bal

girl, thief and slavey, who long to find a better way of living, and who at last, through one another's help, wrench themselves from the gutter; but their distinct affairs, orthodox in their development, are hardly more than an overlay: the doss-house at large, and its imputations against any system which can bring such a place into being, are the film's essence. This is both a strength in the film and a weakness—a strength because endeavours at truth are worth more than romantic tale-spinnings, a weakness because the attempt to give reality to an ample background involves the film in a certain scrappiness and diffusion of energies. The purpose, too, is somewhat obscured by vagueness of allusion, for whereas Gorki wrote of a vigorous contemporary evil, Renoir, by leaving the main references untouched, continues to condemn a Tsarism which has now passed away, and so produces in his film something of the tenuousness of effect of a period-piece. That evils of the kind have not vanished from the world with the overthrow of a single tyranny is but a further reason why the intentions of a film of this order should be more clearly related to things of to-day: the attack would thus be immeasurably sharpened.

There is not overmuch that is Russian about *Nitchevo* besides the title, and there is nothing particularly significant about the title itself. It would indeed be cruel to suggest that a word which means "nothing" might at a pinch have a bearing on the film's intrinsic value, seeing how polished is the production, how sound of its fashion the acting, how fully French the theme, with its undeniable appeal to those who regard compromised wives and jealous husbands as the foundation of entertainment. This is, in brief, solid French melodrama according to a well-tried pattern (secondarily classifiable as submarine-epic), and the basic husband-wife-lover situation, which may be turned with equal facility and convenience to the purposes of comedy or drama, here becomes a profoundly solemn affair, permitting Harry Baur as the husband a considerable length of emotional rope, and making possible scenes of the greatest poignancy, with long argumentative interchanges, between husband and suspected lover in a wrecked submarine on the sea-bottom. There are also a number of sensational rescues, staged with the most admirable realism, from the same submarine; and a pair of happy reunions as a rounding-off. The sad fact remains, that, for all the efficiencies of production, the film's melodramatic ends could more easily and economically have been achieved by a joint revival of *Veille D'Armes* and *The Devil and the Deep*.

A light classical variation on the stock romantic theme above-mentioned is furnished in *Amphitryon*, a skit on a Greek legend, made in France by a French and German company working in conjunction, with Reinhold Schunzel directing, Fritz Arno Wagner at the camera, and Henry Garat taking the leading comic rôle. The virtuous Alcmene, withstanding all temptation while her consort Amphitryon is at the wars, is eventually assailed by the Father of the gods himself, transformed into the absent Amphitryon's shape. His middle-aged lechery is, however, frustrated by circumstance, and he is at length hauled back to Olympus by a bristling spouse. Students of divine scandology will observe that this is a slightly politer version of the original tale, in which Alcmene became the mother of Heracles by Zeus. But then this satyric mix-up of Greek gods with Latin names and extremely Gallic habits never pretends fidelity to any legitimate source. Elizabethan in its carefree anachronisms, it gives us a Hermes in wrinkled tights, a reference to Socrates hundreds of years before the event, and gods of not even heroic stature who come down to earth from Olympus by parachute. Even so, one must query the validity of calling Zeus and his cronies Jupiter and so forth; and the chorus of Greek ladies is just as fatuous as any classical chorus without its lyric quality. The film's humours are generally in keeping with its manner, while the atmosphere of divinity is emphasised by simple celluloid tricks which would have gratified George Méliès; but a large part of the total effect is unquestionably due to the performances of Henry Garat as Jupiter-Amphitryon and Armand Bernard as the reluctant Mercury-Sosias, both notably more adept at this double technique than the current prisoner of Zenda. Garat, who did a neat twin-rôle in *Congress Dances*, is an old hand at the game.

The quarter's tit-bit, enthusiastically hailed by the reviewers, comes not surprisingly from Julien Duvivier. Duvivier is a prolific and consistent director, perhaps not on the whole an originator, but with enough power of insight to give character to all his work. *Un Carnet De Bal* shows him at his best, divorced to the fullest degree from the standardising influences of Hollywood, and handling his material—especially his human material—with imagination and understanding. Françoise Rosay, Louis Jouvet, Harry Baur, Pierre Blanchar, Raimu, Fernandel, Robert Lynen, Marie Bell—what a formidable battalion of names! Only Jean Gabin (who is to be seen, incidentally, with Jouvet in *Underworld*) seems to be missing. So obviously indeed have they been gathered together for a show-piece that one might have feared lest the bare juxtaposition should be thought by the makers enough. But they are assorted with remarkable ingenuity, given each his appropriate place in the action so that they neither clash nor override one another, and directed fittingly: in fact Marie Bell alone, who, as the young widow in pursuit of her adolescence, has the task of linking their separate sequences, attains less than complete reality. She is throughout something of an over-romanticised lay figure, with the make-up a shade too thick on her lips and cheeks.

The subject's tremendous freshness lies in the fact that it rejects the normal screen formula and builds itself instead upon a Proustian research into the past. A young and solitary widow, eighteen years after her first ball, remembered ecstatically, determines to trace the owners of the names on her dance-programme; but finds them all in turn frustrated and diminished shadows of the recollection. Time unredeemable, and a compelled resignation to human sorrows, are ideas of such universal force, particularly in this post-war world, that sensitive treatment makes them irresistible.

On the other hand, neither the allurement of the conception nor the skill of its main execution should blind us to certain flaws—to one or two avoidable abruptnesses of transition, to a simplification of events and issues at specific points, and to a tendency towards overstress of sad-sentimental factors. How is it that nearly all of these men were so deeply in love with the one woman, and that nearly all have descended so tragically? By accident, when the film was shown to the Press, it happened that the latter part of the Raimu sequence was missing, and that the sequence therefore appeared as pure comedy—comedy of the very first order, it may be added. It is a pity that the missing section was ever added, for in its previous form, despite a few obscurities, the episode gave to the film a humorous ballast which, complete, it lacks.

DOCUMENTARIES

Reviewed by WILLIAM FARR

THE SPANISH EARTH (U.S.A., 1937)

Production: Contemporary Historians. *Direction:* Joris Ivens.

LAND WITHOUT BREAD (Spain, 1932)

Direction: Louis Bunuel.

The village of Fuentaduena stands forty miles from Madrid on the road to Valencia, surrounded by great, arid plains. Prevented until now by the landowners, to-day the peasants are carrying out the irrigation schemes which can make the plains bear crops in abundance—and provide food for the defenders of Madrid. As they work they hear in the distance the rumble of guns and the menacing hum of aeroplanes; lorries roar along the strategically vital road to Valencia, and in the village street a youngster on leave from the front gives elementary military training to the lads who may be called to leave the fields for the trenches. The peasants work on so that the soldiers may fight; and the soldiers fight so that the peasants may be free for all time to draw life from the Spanish earth for the Spanish people. There is nothing sensational or melodramatic about this: it is the simple statement of an apparent, real and true situation; and the group of Americans responsible for *The Spanish Earth*, headed by Dos Passos, MacLeish and Hemingway, have told the story simply. They could (if they had not been the people they are) have made an "horrific" or a titillating thriller which the cinemas would have fought to show: the newsreels could have provided the big stuff; or they could (again, if they had not been the people they are) have made a propagandist film to cheer and be cheered by the comrades—and banned from every public cinema by the censors. But instead of exciting montage of spades digging feverishly and at the end, torrents of water filling the screen, we see the peasants working quietly, as if in peace time, to lead a slow channel from the Tagus to their fields; instead of torpedoes hurtling down through the air and the upward leap of masonry, a woman hesitates in the streets, wipes the dust from her eyes and takes her child by the hand; instead of carnage, a single corpse that no one approaches; instead of all the panoply of arms, men moving forward in sixes to contest a vital position; and all the time—in the fields, the streets of Madrid, the trenches and the political meetings—the almost emotionless faces of men and women working, suffering and fighting for the right to live.

In its conception and treatment the film is a noble tribute to the Spanish people; and in its execution—Ivens' honest direction, Ferno's photography and Hemingway's economical and powerful commentary—it is a notable contribution to film-making. It should make Hollywood shudder with disgust at the recollection of *Last Train from Madrid* and hesitate before it starts to capitalise the war in China.

Land Without Bread, made in 1932 and shown in 1937 by the Film Society, provides shocking corroboration, if it is needed, of the theme of *The Spanish Earth*. Who can philosophically argue that the Spanish are misguided to fight if by fighting they may destroy the brutish, living death endured by the Hurdanos, disease-ridden and idiots, living only four miles from Burgos? Is the risk of mutilation and death in war so terrible for people mutilated by life, for whom death begins at birth?

ABYSSINIA (U.S.S.R., 1936)

Production: Soyuskinochronika

THE PATH OF THE HEROES (Italy, 1937)

Production: Luce

The Film Society's presentation of these two films, not separately and successively but dove-tailed, provided an instructive lesson in the realities of modern warfare and of documentary film-making. *Abyssinia* is a compilation of newsreels shot by two Russians from the Abyssinian side; *The Path of the Heroes* is an elaborate film, produced with a maximum of facilities, designed to demonstrate the power and efficiency of Italy at war, with commentary in Italian accompanied by equivalent sub-titles in French and German. The Russian film deals with the war in terms of the human beings subjected to it—Abyssinians living in a primitive, undeveloped country, fighting, but not appreciating until it is too late what they are fighting against; this the Italian film reveals, and holds up for admiration a nation-sized industrial and military machine worked by heroes and heroines, themselves part of the machine.

The method of presentation by contrast adopted by the Film Society might be salutarily applied to other "creative treatments of actuality", for, apart from the commentary about which non-Italians might argue, *The Path of the Heroes* presented only actuality, selected and treated with considerable skill. *Abyssinia* presented actuality no less real, but actuality which finds no place in the Italian film. Conveyor belts and assembly-shop-hands working in perfect harmony, cranes swinging rhythmically between ships and quays, a hundred lorries imposingly silhouetted against the sky, tarred roads triumphing over deserts, streamlined chromium hospital trains, aeroplanes that drop alternately letters from home and live sheep, and bright shining bombs, make a proud picture of achievement. In this case the obverse side is more obvious than in most documentaries, and even without the Russian film here reviewed it would have been known, at any rate in part, to English audiences. This other picture is one of men, women and children scurrying like animals to holes in the ground, blown to pieces, charred by liquid flame and blistered by poison gas. There is perhaps some comfort and hope for the future to be derived from the fact that the Italians (and others who sponsor documentary films) do *not* present all the facts.

AIR OUTPOST (Great Britain, 1937)

WATCH AND WARD IN THE AIR

THE FUTURE IS IN THE AIR

Production: Strand Film Company; Paul Rotha. *Direction:* Alexander Shaw and Ralph Keene.

These three films present some of the activities of Imperial Airways, the organisation behind them, and the effect

of air transport on the world. Reliability, skill, safety, and speed are the keynotes of the stories; new aspects of the beauty of machines and of the earth as seen from the air, revealed by superb photography, and the pride of man in his latest triumphs over nature, pervade the film. Throughout the two short films and, to a lesser extent, in *The Future is in the Air*, the treatment is human, in terms of the skill and discipline of the men who, working in the factories, piloting the machines, and running the airports at home and in isolated stations abroad make these triumphs possible. At Sharjah, an Arab town on the Persian Gulf, is such an *Air Outpost* where four times a week air liners arrive on their journeys between England and the East. Warned by radio of the liner's approach, the Station Superintendent orders his preparations—food, baths and bedrooms for the passengers, searchlights to guide in the liner if it should be late, mail to be carried on next day. The liner arrives, the passengers are taken to their rooms, and, as dusk falls, the mechanics overhaul the engines and the meteorologists prepare the weather reports, while six Arabs provided by the local sheikh stand placidly on guard. At dawn the liner takes off across the desert, lifts effortlessly into the air and swiftly passes over the Arab chief with the chained falcon at his wrist. The story is efficiently and convincingly told and admirably related to the larger story and to the immediate background of Arab life. Similar efficiency and artistry has been brought to *Watch and Ward in the Air*. The subject is more complicated, but the director has mastered the difficulties with ease (particular mention should be made of the brilliant use of animated diagrams); the result is, perhaps, the most effective film of the three. As we watch the various stages of the training of an air pilot first for air liners and then for the new trans-Atlantic flying-boats, maps and charts, air speed and speed over the ground, compass bearings and allowance for drift become intelligible and exciting; and we share the pilot's confidence in his own skill and the skill of the ground services with which he is in constant touch by radio to pilot his machine anywhere in safety.

On airports like Sharjah and the training of the pilots depends the safe and efficient operation of the England to Australia air service, which is the subject of *The Future is in the Air*.

The film was produced to celebrate the inauguration of the Empire Air Mail Programme, the latest and most important development in Empire communications. But apart from the spasmodic reiteration of "letters to this and letters to that," reminiscent of Auden's verse in *Night Mail*, there is little direct reference in the film to this development, which had it been stressed might have given the film the cogent continuity from the lack of which it suffers considerably. Taking off from Southampton the flying boat proceeds to Athens and thence the journey takes us to Alexandria, Karachi, Bangkok, Angkor, Singapore, Bali, across the Timor Sea to the aborigines of Northern Australia and down to Sydney. At each of these, and other places, the camera—but not always the air liner—stopped and recorded material of beauty, fascination and interest. But the travel sequences, excellent as they are, are laboriously and unconvincingly related to any main theme other than the line of the air route, and the film ends on a flat note, instead of on a note of achievement, which is not relieved by the rhetorical introduction of another theme; that since there are bombers as well as air liners, our future is indeed in the air. The theme is surely not the future, but a present achievement: here is a great communication service, carrying passengers and letters to all parts of the Empire more rapidly than they have been carried before, binding the world together, changing the lives of civilised and primitive people wherever it touches them, conquering space and time. But these things are largely left to the commentary where they often sound alternately bombastic or flat and from which attention is constantly distracted by magnificent scenes on the screen. It is not that the film lacks interest but that interest is dissipated.

EASTERN VALLEY (Great Britain, 1937)
Production: Strand Film Company. *Director:* Donald Alexander.

Eastern Valley is the account of a social experiment being carried out in one of the valleys of South Wales. It is a film of interest and importance. Superficially it approximates in style to the style inaugurated by *Housing Problems* and *The March of Time*; but it has qualities of direction too rarely found in films—natural poetic beauty, imaginative sympathy with men and women, and, most fitting with a subject of this kind, humility in the presence of a human and, in the highest sense, vital problem. These qualities derive from an understanding of the philosophy underlying the experiment—that recovery for the modern world must be sought on a spiritual as well as an economic plane. It was in this faith that the Subsistence Production Society was started by an Order of friends. To-day it has four hundred members, miners and steelworkers thrown out of work by the slump, until now paupers in a blasted land. But the present condition is not merely the result of the post-war slump. It is the result of a century old process of industrialisation which destroyed the spiritual and social bases of the life of the people as well as destroying and undermining the land on which they lived. For the hope of economic freedom they sacrificed their freedom. To-day, pooling their unemployment pay and their physical and mental abilities, they are rebuilding the life of the valley, restoring the face of the earth, each working for the common good, not only of this generation but—who knows? —of generations to come, in the Valley and everywhere.

A JOB IN A MILLION (Great Britain, 1937)
Direction: Evelyn Spice

BOOK BARGAIN (Great Britain, 1937)
Direction: Norman McLaren

ROADWAYS (Great Britain, 1937)
Direction: Stuart Legg and W. Coldstream

COPPER WEB (Great Britain, 1937)
Direction: M. Harvey

Nothing is more important to the young boy leaving school than his first job, and the G.P.O. Film Unit has performed yet another social service in showing how one public service, at least, recruits and trains its employees so that the efficiency of the service and the well-being of its employees are both maintained. John Truman is selected with others, from thousands of applicants, as a G.P.O. messenger boy. He is undersize for his age and he is given a special course of physical exercise in addition to the facilities for all kinds of exercise which all the messengers share. After three months progress is slight, but sufficient to warrant his being kept on the staff for the rest of his

two years probationary period. Step by step with his training in his job as a messenger boy—and also in the qualities of discipline and responsibility which the Post Office demands of public servants—John prepares at the G.P.O. School and at home for the passing-out examination. At school he was intelligent but a little backward and he has to work hard, but he passes and starts on his adult career in the service as a postman or a sorter. The film is informative, entertaining and convincing, and most important, it is human: the boys are real boys, each with a personality of his own that must be developed. In John Truman you can see the growing-pains (so-called) of every adolescent: a little self important as he stretches back in his chair and rather reticently replies to his mother as she asks what he has been doing all day; at ease with his elders and betters whom he can answer in monosyllables, but rather awkward and self-concious with his equals. *A Job in a Million* is in every sense an appropriate title.

Book Bargain is a straightforward account of the printing and binding of the G.P.O. Telephone Directory. It presents a fascinating and intelligible picture of dozens of complicated machines designed to perform the most simple manual tasks—but at a speed which hands could not approach. The twenty-two sections of the directory are collected and placed in proper order by machine at the rate of 90 sets a minute; by hand a fast girl can stick one advertisement on the front cover at the rate of ninety a minute. Speed is essential and humanly desirable now that the London directory consists of 2,500 pages and contains the names of 850,000 subscribers. In 1878 the first directory contained the names of 200 subscribers.

In *Roadways* the Unit has tackled a vast and important subject—the development of road transport since the War, the planning of roads to carry this transport, legislation to control it, and the training of drivers. It is a subject of direct relevance to the G.P.O. with its fleets of lorries and vans. But while all the issues are raised they are treated only superficially and are inadequately related to each other. One remembers with pleasure individual sequences—various types of road-users, the scenes at a lorry drivers' pull-in at night—which indicate the film that could be made on this subject.

Copper Web opens well with its exposition of the reasons why the G.P.O. plans by the end of ten years to lay all the trunk telephone lines underground instead of overground—damage from severe weather, ever taller-buildings, the risks to aeroplanes—and it is a decision of outstanding interest to the public. But digressing to point out that in the meanwhile research into methods of treating poles and reafforestation to provide poles continues, the film wanders away to show the laying of a deep-sea cable from England to Holland. In itself it is interesting and well done, but it is not relevant to the main theme which is abruptly revived in a short final sequence.

Included also in the new group of G.P.O. Films are *Trade Tattoo*, Len Lye's latest experiment in colour, *N. or N.W.*, Len Lye's first attempt at a story-film, in black and white, warning the public of the risks of addressing letters inadequately, and *The Daily Round*, a humorous fantasy of a country postman's sorrows and joys, made by Richard Massingham with the leading man from *Tell Me If It Hurts* and *And So To Work*. Each of them is well worth seeing.

OF ALL THE GAY PLACES (Great Britain, 1937)
Direction: Donald Taylor

AROUND THE VILLAGE GREEN (Great Britain, 1936)
Direction: Marion Grierson and Evelyn Spice

LONDON ON PARADE (Great Britain, 1936)

These three films, produced for the Travel and Industrial Development Association, are remarkable for the amount of ordered information which they contain and the simple and attractive way in which it is presented. This applies particularly to *Of All the Gay Places*, which traces the history and development of Bath from Roman times to the present day; continuity is well created and the photography is delightful. *Around the Village Green* presents a well-balanced picture of tradition and innovation in an English village, which is not sentimental nor exaggerated. *London on Parade* only picks out the highlights, but they are related to each other and given some significance.

PONDEROUS BUT VALUABLE

THE CINEMA AS A GRAPHIC ART
Vladimir Nilsen.
Newnes. 15*s.*

No one who has the good fortune to visit the State Institute of Cinematography in Moscow can fail to have been favourably impressed with the work which is being done there in training students, male and female, as directors, cameramen and screen writers.

The most important of these training courses is the one for directors in charge of S. M. Eisenstein, and the methods and theories propounded by him have gradually been adopted in the courses for writers and cameramen also. Vladimir Nilsen, author of the present volume, graduated as a student of the camera at the Moscow Institutes and won the enviable position of second cameraman to Tisse on Eisenstein's productions of *October* and *The General Line*, subsequently becoming chief cameraman on more recent productions.

The fruit of these valuable experiences is this comprehensive text book on motion picture photography as an art. It is heavy going at first, for we Westerners have not the habit of taking the cinema as seriously as the Russians. Admirers of Eisenstein's work will be fascinated by the example of his methods of scenario construction in Section 5 of the first chapter. At the end of his course every Eisenstein pupil has to prepare an entire film production on paper in the manner demonstrated in this section, and in addition, has to supply designs for all sets, costumes, make-up and essential properties, together with information regarding characterisation, and the social, historical and geographical background of the story he has chosen. The example treated here, and illustrated shot by shot in the most detailed and precise manner, contains only so much of this preparation work as is essential for the use of the cameraman.

It is a pity that the range of the book does not extend to aspects of film construction other than photography, but even within its self-imposed limits this is a work that should be in the library of every technician, whether professional or amateur, working in film production. THOROLD DICKINSON

VICTORIA THE GREAT

A further review by Professor F. J. C. HEARNSHAW, *prepared at the request of the British Film Institute and the Historical Association. It deals with one of the most successful historical films ever made*

BY ALMOST universal consent the film *Victoria the Great* is a brilliant and conspicuous success. Before it was displayed in Great Britain it had been acclaimed in America, and it had won the Cup of All Nations at Venice. Its reception in London has been one prolonged triumph. Its success is all the more remarkable because, so we are told, it was produced in the amazingly brief period of six weeks. There is, however, a freshness and spontaneity about it that suggests freedom from wearisome iterations. There can be no question, nevertheless, that behind the six weeks of actual production there lay many months of wide reading, intense study, and careful preparation on the part of Mr. Herbert Wilcox, the Director, and his associates. The choice of actors, too, must have been an anxious and difficult matter. The fact that no single one of them can be regarded as a failure is evidence of Mr. Wilcox's exceptionally sound judgment in respect both of Victorian statesmen and present-day film stars. The focal figures are, of course, Miss Anna Neagle as Queen Victoria and Mr. Anton Walbrook as the Prince Consort. They both play their parts superbly. Miss Neagle's representation of the Queen at every stage of her career from the age of eighteen to that of seventy-eight is little short of a miracle both of acting and of "make-up." She is, naturally, most true to reality in the earlier scenes. Those who, like the present writer, knew the Queen by sight in her later years, miss something both of bulk and of benevolence in the film representation of the great lady at the time of her Diamond Jubilee. Of the statesmen, Melbourne, Palmerston and the young Disraeli are the most convincing; Gladstone the least.

THE STORY

Any and every film or stage representation of a reign of sixty years must inevitably consist of a series of selected episodes. In the choice of the dozen episodes which Mr. Wilcox has picked out as typical of the period, it is obvious that he has been immensely assisted by the previous selection made by Mr. Laurence Housman in his

masterly and penetrating series entitled *Victoria Regina*—the composite play which has enjoyed so long a run at the Lyric Theatre. It is also obvious that Mr. Wilcox in the main follows Mr. Housman in his interpretation of character.

The film begins with the announcement to the young Queen of her accession to the throne on the early morning of June 21st, 1837. It proceeds to portray the vindication by the Queen of her independence as against the attempted tutelage of the Duchess of Kent, the King of the Belgians and Baron Stockmar. It then shows her relations with her first prime ministers, Melbourne and Peel. Then follows the central interest of the piece, namely, the courtship, marriage, and honeymoon of Victoria and Albert: all this is full of charm, coupled with a good deal of genuine amusement. Next come the attempt on the Queen's life by Edward Oxford in 1840; the birth of Albert Edward in 1841; the social unrest of the hungry 'forties culminating in an attack on Buckingham Palace; the repeal of the Corn Laws in 1846. A leap then is made to 1861 when we see, first, the Queen and the Prince intervening to prevent Palmerston from precipitating a war with America; and, secondly, the unexpected death of the Prince a fortnight later. The death of the Prince completes and concludes the main and unifying action of the film. Two spectacular episodes follow by way of epilogue. Both of them are brilliantly represented in colour. The one displays the proclamation of the Queen as Empress of India in 1876; the other marks the culmination of the reign in the Diamond Jubilee of 1897.

A FEW CRITICISMS

With regard to the historicity and accuracy of the film representation of the scenes depicted, I think it safe to say that never before has so much care been taken to eliminate error, or so much skill been shown in reproducing exactly the topographical backgrounds. The buildings, the costumes, the furniture, the modes of lighting—all are reproduced with marvellous correctness. Even the speeches of the leading actors are generally composed of authentic utterances, authoritatively reported. The historical critic, therefore, when he comes to examine and report upon this masterly and impressive film, is compelled to limit his remarks to comparatively minor points. And when he mentions them he does not for one moment imply that all of them are flaws. For in all stage or film representations of historic events certain concentrations and transformations in both time and space are justifiable and even necessary. The following, then, are a few of these minor deviations from fact:

(1) Stockmar is spoken of as a German. Although he was a German baron, he was by race a Swede.

(2) The guns at the time of the Queen's proclamation are apparently fired by electricity. This is an anachronism.

(3) The form of the proclamation of the Queen's accession is rather that of Edward VII than that of Victoria: it concludes with the word "Dominions."

(4) The Queen is represented as seeing Prince Albert and his brother, Ernest, for the first time in 1839, when the royal marriage was arranged. As a matter of fact both the princes had visited England in 1836. The episodes of the two visits are fused.

(5) The Queen is represented as ignorant of the German for "honeymoon" and as having to learn how to pronounce "Flitterwochen" from Prince Albert. German had been her language from infancy. Her mother, the Duchess of Kent, could speak nothing else at all fluently.

(6) The Queen is represented as taking her first railway journey on her honeymoon (February, 1840). The railway from Paddington to Windsor was then not open. Her first journey occurred in June, 1842.

(7) The attempted assassination of the Queen by Edward Oxford on Constitution Hill in 1840 is connected with the Chartist Agitation and is thus given a political significance. It had none. Edward Oxford was not, as represented, an elderly revolutionary; he was merely a lunatic boy.

(8) Albert Edward is called "Prince of Wales" at his birth. He was born Earl of Chester, and was not created Prince of Wales until several weeks later.

(9) The influence of the Queen and the Prince Consort in determining the issue of the Corn Law conflict in 1846 is considerably exaggerated. Moreover, into Disraeli's speech condemning Peel for his abandonment of Protection some rather serious interpolations occur. There is no record that he spoke of Peel as "under the thumb" of Her Majesty.

(10) More serious still is the injustice done to Palmerston in respect of the American crisis of 1861. The seizure by an American warship of two diplomatic agents from a British passenger-boat was admittedly a gross violation of international law. It called for strong protest. The protesting despatch, however, was drawn up not by Palmerston (as represented) but by Lord John Russell, the Foreign Secretary. Moreover, Palmerston did not personally, and rather rudely, press its acceptance upon the Queen and the Prince, for all the time he was helplessly laid up with gout at Broadlands. Further, the Prince did not sit up all night writing another despatch; he merely got up in good time in the morning and before breakfast made some modifications in Russell's despatch. Above all, neither Palmerston nor Russell had the slightest desire to go to war with America; nor had they any expectation that war would result from their energetic and wholly justified protest. Nevertheless, the Prince's mitigations of Russell's severity undoubtedly eased the situation.

(11) The Proclamation of the Queen as Empress of India in 1876 is, in the film, accompanied by the playing of Elgar's *Land of Hope and Glory*. This was not composed until thirty years later.

(12) Mr. Gladstone is rather badly caricatured by his film representative. He was not nearly so pompous and tactless as he is shown. Moreover, it was not to Gladstone himself, but to a third person, that the Queen complained that he "addressed her as though she were a public meeting."

It will be seen that most of these deviations from historic fact are trivial. Most of them, too, can be defended on the ground of histrionic desirability. When all is said, the fact remains that *Victoria the Great* is a supremely fine film, and one that reflects infinite credit upon both producer and actors.

This film, which has proved an outstanding success in both England and America, is likely, SIGHT AND SOUND understands, to earn a gross revenue of more than £1,000,000.

MOVIE PARADE, 1937

From a lofty eyrie GRAHAM GREENE *surveys the passing pageant of the year*

IT DOESN'T matter if we are late. . . . There'll be another next year, and you won't be able to tell any difference, watching the parade from the top of the Odeon tower. It's not like literature: in 1915 when Henry James died, you knew it was the end of something important, but when Thalberg died last year—or was it 1936?—everything remained just the same as before. No, the really interesting thing about 1937 was not the pictures themselves, they are but the hideous occasional glimpse of the film mind. Louis B. Mayer saying at lunch, "If ever there was a Christ-like man in human form, it was my friend Marcus Loew"; Jean Harlow corresponding with a fan she hadn't met—"Dear Old Safety Valve, Stan, dear: If a girl ever relied on friendship, I do, and I have relied on yours. . . . It's nine o'clock and the old blonde hair must be put in pins and the body put to rest. . . . Best love to the grandest friend a girl ever had. (Signed) Me." And, of course, we mustn't forget the leopard skin seats at the Odeon.

It's no good though—we've got to have the parade, and anyway in the Odeon tower we're a nice long way from what Miss Lejeune calls the old troopers: they won't be able to tell whether we are applauding or not. What's the statue in the middle of the square? With the little beard and the finger on the forehead? Oh, that's the man who wrote *The Christian* and *The Deemster*.

One feels up here like characters in the first act of *Troilus and Cressida* (scenery by Reinhardt), high on the Trojan battlements watching the heroes return from the Plain of Troy. Oh for the speech of a Pandarus to distinguish them—"asses, fools, dolts, chaff and bran, chaff and bran!" There goes the year's technihorror, *The Trail of the Lonesome Pine*. No it's not; it's *God's Country and the Woman*. The *Lonesome Pine* was 1936, but it doesn't make any difference; next year it will be *Only God Can Make a Tree* (a successful shot of a falling pine and some lake scenery). Any advance in colour? None that you'd notice. The films, like the Spanish War, just go on—they don't get any better. We clapped as much as we are going to clap at *Becky Sharp* in 1935.

There goes the worst film of the year—*The Last Train from Madrid*. Give it a hand; it was funnier than most of the comics; and—an astonishing thing—none of the critics praised it. There are some other next-to-worst films just behind—Sidney Carroll is tossing his hat in the air and even Lejeune is showing enthusiasm: the Denham spy film, *The Dark Journey*, with its hopelessly involved script, *Thunder in the City* (special effects by Ned Mann), Jessie Matthews' *Head Over Heels*, and tieing with our English worsts an American and a couple of Continentals, *The Road Back*, *Der Ammenkoenig*—that heavy Teuton sportiness, those Goering rompers—and *Stradivarius*. Two more pictures from Denham I seem to see down there in the third-rate class: *Fire Over England* (in spite of Pommer) and *Elephant Boy* (in spite of Flaherty). Queen Elizabeth as headmistress of Cheltenham Ladies College wins the devotion of all the junior mistresses and even some of the governors—though there's some dirty work with model ships in the swimming baths: as for *Elephant Boy*, whatever you feel about Flaherty's documentary camera, this was meant to be fiction, and as fiction it was incompetent. No extra elephants and rubber models could retrieve what Flaherty lost in India—a story line.

If you look hard enough you may be able to detect some really good English films. Nobody's taking any notice; everybody's looking at *Victoria the Great*, the most overrated film of the year with a sequence in technihorror. It is said to show that we can break into the American market with the right films, but is shows too, that you don't need to be an American to be ignorant of English history and English atmosphere. The best English films of the year to my mind are *For Valour*, with Tom Walls and Ralph Lynn, and *Oh, Mr. Porter*, with Will Hay. I don't mean just technically English—with the producer and director foreign by birth, otherwise Feydn's valiant *Knight Without Armour* would need mention, but genuinely English—the music hall as nearly at its best as the censor will allow.

That? Oh, that's *Lost Horizon* (it has got out of its right place, which is with the third-rate films of the year), the typical middlebrow novel with its pretensions to poetry and thought for once presented on the screen in all its dreariness, unmitigated by revolver shots. There'll be another in next year's show because the long film has come to stay and you can't fill up two hours without padding. Let us pray the next Capra's not called *Sparkenbroke*.

What's the good of staying up here and enumerating pictures of which we can probably only remember they made an hour or two pass easily. 1937 had its good comedies like any other year: *Woman Chases Man*, *Easy Living*, *Saratoga* (Jean Harlow's last), *Theodora Goes Wild*, *Angel* (not up to Lubitsch standard); best of all, I think, *True Confession* (with John Barrymore starting pluckily over again as a buffoon with waggling hips and a signature tune) and *Amphitryon* (a French version of the old Greek cuckolding story Dryden played about with, light, effervescent, deliciously unimportant, with charmingly transient music). 1937, too, had its good gangster dramas—*His Affair* (where they wore Edwardian boaters and parked Edwardian hats); *Winterset* (in which Eduardo Cianelli, the most damned among the damned, made his fine screen début in a setting of doubtful poetry); *Dead End* (a magnificent picture of the environment which breeds the gangster but the credit belongs really to the stage). 1937 had its Western—*The Plainsman*, De Mille handling his crowds as superbly as he always does, but for once with a good story and fine actors—Gary Cooper and Jean Arthur. There were biographies—not as good as *Pasteur*, but in the same rather pompous Galsworthian tradition: *The Life of Emile Zola*, an incurably American picture of a French writer, and *Parnell*, less pompous but more fake. There were Garbos—*Camille*, Hollywood's version of *La Dame aux Camellias*, the story which Henry James described as having been "blown about the world at a fearful rate . . . all champagne and tears" (Garbo can do the tears to perfection, but her gawky tragic body cannot manage champagne), and *Marie Walewska*, fine acting in an unfortunate script. There was a Marx Brothers—*A Day at the Races*, a little too

glossy and expensive and reasonable, so that we missed the shaky sets of the primitive camera, and there was a fair average batch of social dramas, ranging from *Craig's Wife* (the most sophisticated) to *Make Way for To-Morrow* (the most sentimental and yet the most moving of all). There was an "epic"—*The Good Earth*, and there was one of those "Sports" which seem to get past the Hollywood executioners by accident; this year it was the ridiculous picture of political justice, *They Won't Forget*. I don't suppose 1936 could show a better lot than that: the trouble is, I don't suppose 1938 will either. Then, of course, there was the year's discovery—Deanna Durbin—Oh, God, Oh, Montreal; let's go down and sit in the dark on leopard skins and talk about the few pictures which still interest us now that the celluloid has stopped revolving.

There was Dickinson's first film, *The High Command*; not a very good story, uncertain dialogue, but moments of the finest cinematic sense—that time, for example, when the West African band played God Save the King and everyone stood stockstill in the clubhouse, while the Hamatan blew the potted plants over and banged the windows and not a servant dared to stir for three verses: a film important, too, because, though a unit was sent to West Africa, it yet cost only a third of an average Denham production, an example of the economy which is surely our only chance of establishing a national industry.

Then one remembers another brilliant and economical English picture, Edmond Greville's *Brief Ecstacy*, with its adult sexuality and brilliant camera sense. And last and best Duvivier comes to mind, and *Pepé Le Moko* and *Un Carnet De Bal*, sense of violence and a sense of poetry: not poetry expressed in literary terms as it was in *Winterset*, but in camera movement, like that last doomed symphonic walk of Pepé in his pointed polished gamin shoes down from the security of the Old Town of Algiers to the harbour and the tourist quarter where the police waited; or again that slanting floor in the abortionists's surgery in *Un Carnet De Bal*, which seemed to represent the seedy doctor's whole hopeless dream of escape from the habit of a lifetime, the grim climb up to the door, the easy slope to the surgical couch and the spirit flame "Why, this is hell, nor am I out of it."

Listen to the cheers. That must be one of the super-productions going by—or the last Grace Moore (I've already forgotten its name). Perhaps I was wrong when I said that a death didn't make any difference to the screen. Perhaps with Duvivier something might die we can't find elsewhere—a poetic realism, a sense of moral values. And perhaps he's dead now while I write and 1938 will see the tombstone laid, for he's left France for Hollywood. Cheers again. It must be *Love from a Stranger* or *Dreaming Lips* or *Storm in a Teacup*. "Ne'er look, ne'er look," as Pandarus said, when Troilus had passed. "The eagles are gone: crows and daws, crows and daws."

STILL-FILMS IN SCHOOL

STILL-FILMS consist of a number of photographic images upon a strip of standard cine-film. They are used in conjunction with a still-film projector (or an attachment to a slide or film projector), by means of which each picture can be shown on a screen for as long as may be required.

The still-film has many advantages over the lantern slide and, because of this, is increasing in popularity in our schools. It is unbreakable and can easily be stored in a small tin. It is easier of manipulation than a series of lantern slides, the loading being the work of a minute, whilst the change from picture to picture involves merely the turning of a knob. It is cheaper than lantern slides, the cost of hire (there are several good libraries) being approximately one penny per picture.

To what uses can the still-film be put in the classroom?

1. It can replace almost completely the episcope and to some extent the lantern. For a cost of approximately threepence a picture, the teacher can have still-films made of his own prints, photographs, musical scores, diagrams, specimens, etc.

2. It can be of great assistance to the film-using teacher in two ways:

(*a*) Many teachers often desire to stop a film on a certain frame so as to go into greater detail than is provided by the commentary, or than is possible in the time for which the picture is on the screen during a normal projection. Many, too, like to adopt what has been called the "analytical" method of using a film—stopping the film at various points whilst recapitulating the subject matter which has gone before and preparing for the material which is to follow.

To stop a film on a certain frame, however, is only possible on a few projectors. Besides, stopping a film is most unsatisfactory, destroying as it does the fundamental property of the cinematograph film—its continuity, that property which is the basis of its claim for introduction into the classroom.

If significant pictures from cinematograph films were to be made up into still-films, a satisfactory technique might be evolved in which the film is shown first to enable the pupils to gain an impression of its process, and the subject matter elaborated later with the aid of the still-film.

(*b*) Another difficulty arising in the use of classroom films is that of providing reference subsequent to the showing of a film. This necessary reference could easily be provided by means of a still-film made up of significant pictures from the cinematograph film. Such still-films could be made by the instructional film producers and sold to schools at quite a reasonable price.

3. Many teachers, whilst deploring feature films generally, regret that they are unable to use certain extracts from them in their teaching. In the production of a film, the producer's research department goes to a great deal of trouble to ensure that details of costume, custom and settings are correct. The teacher does not want to show the players and their action, but he does want to use these details. They are, most of them, the material of the still-media and, obviously, could easily be made the subject of a still-film. Many teachers of history, for example, would have found invaluable still-films of significant pictures from *Fire Over England* or *Victoria the Great*.

G. BUCKLAND SMITH

THE CINEMA IN CANADA

CINEMATICALLY, AS in almost every other cultural sense, Canada is a province of the United States. There is a frontier between the two countries, but it is virtually non-existent in the realm of ideas. The consequence is that Canadians are bombarded, night and day, by the fancies, sentiments and opinions of their neighbours, conveyed through the medium of reading-matter, radio broadcasts and motion pictures.

Of these three main channels of expression which unceasingly pour their stream of notions upon the Dominion the motion pictures encounter least opposition. There is a Canadian newspaper and periodical press, and a number of book-publishing concerns to offset the flood of reading-matter; there is a nationally-owned radio system which reaches from coast to coast to counteract the effects of American broadcasting; but there is not a single film-producing unit in Canada which for a moment can compete with the efforts of Hollywood mass production.

About 550 Hollywood films find their way into Canada annually. They enjoy to all intents and purposes a monopoly, whether they are exhibited in the large cities or in the backwoods villages. The only competition they receive is from British and French films.

Some 80 British films are imported every year and about 100 French films. The British films are shown mainly where there is a strong English-born element in the population—in Toronto, for example, or in Calgary or Vancouver. In these centres they are seen and praised very often because they are British and not for any particular cinematic merit.

Elsewhere, only the top-rank British films have a chance —a *Private Life of Henry VIII*, or *A Ghost Goes West*, or a *Victoria the Great*, and an occasional Jessie Matthews musical picture. For the rest, the London productions are shoved in as "second features" on double-feature programmes, which are now universal except in large, first-run houses.

Canadians have a sense of humour more akin to American standards than to British. One result is that they cannot "see" such an artist as Gracie Fields (most Canadians, indeed, have never even heard of her) while the antics of such gentlemen as Ralph Lynn, Jack Hulbert and Gordon Harker are viewed with a sort of blank incredulity.

One development in the making of British films is having its effect, however. It is the growing habit of London directors of importing United States stars to take parts in British-made pictures. These are "names", and names sell the films to the fans. When, therefore, an English film comes along with such a personage in the cast as Robert Taylor or Marlene Dietrich, it is billed for names, and the public attends in most cases quite unaware of the country of origin until they get inside the theatre. This name system often produces amusing results. For instance, Jessie Matthews' *Gangway* was proclaimed on an awning in one large city as a picture "with Nat Pendleton". No reference was made to Miss Matthews.

An attempt has been made to offset the advantages enjoyed by United States producers in the form of a tariff preference in favour of Empire-made films. The customs tax on British films is $1\frac{1}{2}$ cents per running foot, while it is three cents under the general tariff. But this makes little difference in the distribution of films, because American films are printed in Canada. The master negative is sent from Hollywood in bond, and after prints have been made it is returned. Since six prints are usually made of most films, it means that the equivalent of five of them escape the tariff.

French films are imported for exhibition in the Province of Quebec, where there is a French-speaking population of 2,900,000. The chief centres in which they find a public are Montreal, Quebec, Hull (across the provincial boundary from Ottawa) and Ottawa. French films imported last year into Canada amounted to 1,160,000 feet, as compared with 960,000 feet of British films.

There is a steady demand for French-made films, but, in general, they have to be pretty innocuous because the censorship is strict and Quebec public taste simple. The Quebec censors last year, for instance, would not permit the public exhibition of *La Kermesse Héroïque* and René Clair is greeted with stifled yawns by French-Canadian film-goers (as he is by most film-goers, of course, wherever they may be found). Such a distinguished film as Duvivier's *Un Carnet De Bal*, however, will sometimes enjoy a month's opening run in the theatre that specialises in first showings of French films in Montreal.

In 1936 there were 856 motion-picture theatres in Canada, as compared with 799 the year before, with a total of 116,976,000 paid admissions, representing receipts of $27,173,400. Receipts were up 7 per cent for the year, but were still 30 per cent below the amounted recorded in 1930. The average admission price is 24 cents (1*s*.).

Most of Canada's cinema houses are members of "chains", owned and operated by financial groups. One company, Famous Players Canadian Corporation, which is the largest, owns 250 of Canada's picture theatres. They spread from Halifax to Prince Rupert. Other chain enterprises are United Amusements, Ltd., and Twentieth Century Theatres, with about fifty houses, all in Eastern Canada.

It would be a mistake, however, to suppose that the distributors are "against" British films. If the latter are of a kind to attract the customers, they are only too eager to give them a run. But they have to be good. (Sometimes they are not good. *Wings of the Morning* was a phenomenal success in Canada. Was it due to Annabella, to colour, or to the archaic sentiment? I think mostly the latter.)

A British film is still eyed dubiously by most exhibitors—and by a majority of the public as well. This attitude is a legacy from the days when British films were a reflection upon the intelligence of their makers and when flag-waving was resorted to as a substitute for intrinsic worth.

But the situation is changing, and a London motion picture is given every opportunity to make good. Incidentally, the head of the Famous Players Canadian Corporation (affiliated financially with Paramount) is also the head of the Empire Film Exchange, which is the distributing medium for British films in Canada.

Canadian film production, except in the field of newsreels, topical, sport, travel and educational shorts, is almost

non-existent. The chief producers include the already-noted Associated Screen News of Montreal, which makes news pictures and shorts. This company's "Cameo" series is a credit to Canada and several of them can take their place beside the best.

The Dominion operates the Dominion Government Motion Picture Bureau at Ottawa, which makes films describing Canadian industries and also travel pictures. It also produces an occasional full-length picture such as *Salute to Valor*, the story of the Canadian Legion's pilgrimage to France and the Vimy Monument in 1936. But it is handicapped in various ways and is otherwise prevented from making the impression it might.

Also a government producing unit is the National Parks Bureau, which has turned out some notable work. It specialises in scenic and holiday films, and has to its credit a number of films that are worthy of inclusion on Film Society programmes.

A number of efforts have been made in the past to form successful feature-producing companies in Canada. One reason for this has been the hope that such companies would gain an advantage in the British market under the British quota for Empire-made films. But in no single case (with one curious exception) has such a company made a film that could hold its own against the impact of Hollywood or London, or survived one, or at most, two feature productions. The curious exception is the Central Films, Ltd., of Victoria, British Columbia. This unit is a subsidiary of Central Films of Hollywood, and in two years has produced twelve feature pictures. But not one, so far as this reporter is able to discover, has ever been shown in Canada. They are all movies for the Empire trade outside Canada, and are made in British Columbia with Hollywood money for the quota traffic.

Cinema progress in the non-commercial field in Canada has been limited, but there is hope. Three years ago the National Film Society of Canada was launched, modelled on the British Film Institute. It was expected that it would develop into a strong movement for promoting the film as an educational medium and for the study of pictures of artistic merit not ordinarily shown in the commercial theatres.

The National Film Society has made considerable headway, but against heavy odds. If the founders had hoped that it would be welcomed by the various governments (there are ten in Canada) and educational institutions, they have been rather disappointed. Every obstacle has been thrown in their path, many as a consequence of complaints from commercial interests, while governments have manifested not the slightest interest in their aspirations. And if the benefit of the doubt had to be awarded, it has mainly gone against the Society.

However, there are now eight branches of the Society in the country—Montreal, Ottawa, Kingston, Toronto, Hamilton, Edmonton, Calgary and Vancouver. They carry on against discouragement, but are now fairly well established. Their activities have been mainly confined, so far, to showing those films which never reach the commercial screen. They take the place of the small, specialised movie theatres that are found in New York, London and other great cities, but which do not exist anywhere in Canada. And so the first season of the film societies is usually taken up with exhibitions of films that have long been famous but which have never been seen in Canada—such films as *Potemkin*, *Sous les Toits de Paris*, *The Blue Light*, *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* and "*M*". But this season the work of the societies is developing on broader lines and it is pleasing to be able to report that educational work is being taken up on a wide front.

E. W. HARROLD

WHAT THEY ARE DOING

The Educational Cinema abroad reviewed by F. WILKINSON

DURING LAST summer, thanks to the Leverhulme Fellowship Trustees, I was able to make a tour of France, Germany and U.S.S.R. My purpose was to investigate the whole matter of the film in education in these countries, and my choice of ground was decided by the different conditions which I expected to find in each country.

In the course of my tour I visited ministries of education and, where they existed, those departments of government which dealt especially with the film either as education or propaganda. I had discussions with a large number of officials and, of course, with educationalists and teachers. I viewed representative selections of films and attended film lessons in schools. In addition to my own scheme of enquiry I also undertook to collect information on behalf of certain producers of educational films in this country.

Through the generosity of my hosts in all three countries, I was able to gain a fairly comprehensive knowledge of most of the matters pertaining to the film in education, and I hope in this series of articles to put my information for what it is worth at the disposal of my colleagues. In this first article, however, I want to use my recent experiences to deal with a matter which has been for some time seriously exercising the minds of those who wish to see the film take a more prominent place in our educational system. I refer to the small number of projectors which have so far been supplied to schools in this country compared with the figures which come to us from abroad.

For instance, just after I left England the Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Education was reported as stating that Germany had 17,000 and France 9,100 projectors to our 810. Mr. Lindsay then went on to say, "I am dissatisfied . . . Germany and Italy and other European countries are ahead of us. . . ." Now the questions that I feel that I can answer are—"to what extent we are behind other countries because we lag behind them in projectors?" and "are we behind in other respects as well?"

In the first place my own version of the figures are that Germany has 17,500 projectors distributed amongst 70,567 educational institutions of every type. In the case

of France the figures issued include those projectors installed in the Centres Rurals, as well as in schools and universities. These institutions approximate to our village institutes, but in France they are administered by the Ministry of Education, and at the moment their development is at the forefront of educational policy. Therefore, in most cases I am inclined to think that, were it not for the existence of a Centre, the adjacent school might possibly be without its projector.

Then I can add that in U.S.S.R. "some 5,000 schools are making use of the film". This was the actual wording of the official statement as given to me. Moreover, I was told on good authority that in the present Five Year Plan a further 80,000 models for schools are to be manufactured, but in September, when I was there, the size of film had not then been decided. A Commission was in process of debating the matter and it was thought that the recommendation would be for an 8mm. silent projector, a size which to my mind will make teaching by film hardly worth while.

But, whatever qualification one tries to make with regard to figures of projectors issued, the smallness of the English numbers can never be condoned. It is therefore reassuring to find that in practically every other respect the English position is by comparison highly exemplary.

Projectors alone cannot give a complete estimate. They must be considered in relation to the quality and nature of the films shown through them and also to the manner in which the teacher uses the opportunities which the whole medium gives him.

With regard to the number of films at the disposal of teachers, Germany, at the time of my visit, had produced 150 films for all her institutions, and additions were being made at the rate of 70 a year. France had issued a formidable catalogue, but on analysis only a handful I found had been made primarily for school use, and those I saw seemed to me not to have quite severed their connection with the lantern slide. In the Soviet Union about 125 films have been made for elementary and secondary schools, but I was surprised to find that the examples I was shown were extremely crude. In Russia the school is not the only place and very often not the most important place where the child receives its education, and other films produced for the Pioneer Centres and Children's Cinemas restored my respect for the Soviet producers.

Contrasting these achievements with our own I am of the opinion that we have a larger and wider choice. Especially is this so in Geography, History (Russia has no historical films for school use. In France the historical film is regarded as "too dangerous". In Germany history is now used as the most suitable medium for social training and a number of diagram films have been produced, but are not superior to our own), Languages, Religion and what is called Documentary. Where we fall short is mainly in films for very young children.

Except for puppet films in Russia and Germany I saw no instances of better studio technique than we have achieved here, and I came across several examples in all countries of methods and ideas still being employed which we regard as being outmoded.

None of the three countries has introduced sound films into their schools and the reasons given are those of expense and unsuitability. Only in films for higher education is sound used and then it is natural sound and not commentary unless it is the purport of the film to introduce a particular person. (Here I must correct a misstatement made in this Journal some time ago regarding children's sound films in U.S.S.R. A writer alleged that such films as *The Road of Life* were originally produced for children. When I repeated this statement in the Commissariat of Education in Moscow, it was greeted with the most hilarious laughter that I heard during my whole visit, for owing to the "liquidations" no one was feeling very comfortable. It turned out that certain adult films had been shown in the Children's Cinemas in Moscow and amongst them was *The Road to Life*. But there was such an outbreak of juvenile crime as a result of the suggestibility to gangsterdom in the first part of the film that it had to be withdrawn and children's programmes have ever since been much more carefully selected.)

Coming to the matter of the extent to which educationalists abroad have promoted research into the nature and potentiality of the film in education, and also into the best methods for its use, I came to the conclusion that we in this country are definitely ahead. The film, especially in Germany and Russia, has been taken largely for granted, and in any case the critical nature of their social problems obliged them to make full and immediate use of so powerful an agent of mass propaganda. It may be that we in this country have been engaged in too much discussion and too little action, but at any rate there is nothing comparable abroad to the pamphlets issued by the various panels of the British Film Institute. There is also nothing as good as our publications which are issued as a guide to selection such as the Institute bulletins and the brochures which Gaumont British Instructional issue with their films.

Turning to the class-room practice I was prepared to find a more mature and assured technique abroad, but to my astonishment I found that the reverse was the case. Our superiority, I believe, is due in this respect to the fact that the film has been introduced abroad largely by official ordinance and has not been the outcome of free desire on the part of the teachers. Therefore there is a certain element of perfunctoriness in the use made of the film by foreign teachers. Even in obedient Germany I came across schools which only used films in order to please the authorities, and there were others which only did so when their pupils demanded some return for their 20 pfennigs a quarter. A film show was then given in the hall but was not repeated until the next outcry.

If, therefore, one takes all the other factors into consideration, as well as the number of projectors installed, I believe that one is not very far from the truth when one claims that English children are receiving pretty well as much worth-while information from the film in their schools as their fellows are receiving in other countries. But such a statement by no means absolves us from our feeling of dissatisfaction. The cause, however, is not lack of projectors, that is a consequence; and the fault is not primarily with the teachers but with the community at large.

No improvement in the present situation can be expected until the making and distributing of educational films is organised and subsidised from one central organisation, for all media of mass communication must have central administration. Also when the English public realises that the film is a national service and that the integrity of our culture significantly depends upon it, then perhaps more things will be put right than the lack of projectors in our schools.

PSYCHOLOGY AND THE EDUCATIONAL FILM

WHEN "PSYCHOLOGY" occurs in the same sentence as "cinema", many people have a faint sense of nausea. All too frequently the sentence comes to be a text, if not a pretext, for generalisations in the grand manner on the low mentality of the public, the corruption of childish innocence, or occasionally on the value of the cinema as an outlet for repressed urges. The fault lies not with the genuine psychologist but with the numerous company of quacks who are qualified only by a self-confidence unshaken by any knowledge of the subject. Against the flood of easy generalisation, the only effective barrier is a knowledge of what psychology has said with authenticity on the film. Our immediate concern is with the educational film.

A considerable amount of psychological study has been devoted to examining the value of the film as a teaching aid. Indeed the experiments concerned with this subject have been more frequent and, on the whole, more thorough than on any other aspect of the educational film. A study of the literature would suggest that the protagonists of the film in school are a cautious company anxious to convince themselves that they are not really cranks. Perhaps they have considered that educational administrators are a suspicious race whose confidence is only to be won by the repeated assurance "There's no deception, gentlemen". Whatever the cause, the fact remains that a considerable amount of time and of ingenuity have been expended on repeated demonstrations of the efficacy of the educational film. The earliest of these investigations was probably that instituted by the National Council of Morals, under the direction of Professor Spearman and Professor Burt, and reported in *The Cinema in Education* in 1925 (edited by Sir James Marchant). The main object of the study was the comparison of films and slides as teaching aids; the technique of the control group was employed; the method of evaluating the gain in learning made use of essays written by the pupils. In subsequent investigations, refinements in method occurred and minor problems were elucidated, but on the whole, most of them did little more than amplify the findings of this early enquiry. The most thorough study of the value of the film as a teaching device was that made by Freeman and Wood, described in their book *Motion Pictures in the Classroom*. Eleven thousand children in twelve cities of U.S.A. took part in the experiment. A control group was used similar in intelligence, social environment, and general knowledge to the experimental group. Special films in geography and in general science were made. Carefully devised tests of knowledge were given at the beginning and at the end of the experimental period; the questions in the terminal tests could be answered from study guides which were used by both the control and experimental groups. The control group was allowed to use any visual aid apart from films. The experimental group showed a marked superiority over the control group in the apprehension of general principles, and still more so in the learning of detailed facts. This experiment may be taken as final confirmation of the results obtained in such enquiries as those made at Yale, Leeds and Glasgow. It would be unfair to dismiss the latter experiments as concerned solely with the educational value of the cinema. Facts were also produced dealing with such problems as the teacher's ability to judge the value of a film, the usefulness of the film as a means of stimulating interest, the permanence of learning. Reference should also be made to the Middlesex study of sound films in school in which the minor but not unimportant point was made that the sound film appealed strongly to the retarded and improved considerably their performance in learning. But when the fullest allowance is made for all the reported experiments, it must be said that this field of study is far from being exhausted. No great harm would follow if a "close season" were declared on mass experiments on the general value of the educational film, but there is need for the examination of individual variations in film-learning. Problems concerning the content of films, their form, the ways in which they may best be used, are still in need of careful examination. Differences in film-learning due to sex, age, intelligence, are still to be assessed. A host of questions requiring the application of scientific method for their answering will arise when consideration is given to the widespread use of sound and colour.

The methods used in the direct study of the educational film and in general psychology depend on measurement and the careful statistical elaboration of results. There is, however, another range of psychology in which the main technique of study is observation rather than measurement. A vast amount of information has been collected, for example, about the spontaneous play and interests of children, and much of this child study is relevant to the problems of the educational film. Exact observation of children is not the monopoly of the psychologist; the wise teacher assimilates a wide range of information about child nature. A fact of common observation is the interest that children have in people. This fact has been admitted and used much more readily by the makers of school readers than by the makers of school films. Watch a group of young children tackling the early stages of reading and notice how keen they are to follow the simple adventures of the "characters" depicted in the illustrations. Why not make more use in the film of this sense of intimacy and identification with other little people? Another interest and one which is often unsatisfied by the school is that in the everyday work of grown-ups. There was a time when children not only witnessed but shared in the work of production. That time has gone and with it valuable lessons of social adaptation as well as insight into the web of economic life. Modern industry has said to the educator, "No admittance except on business", and the educator has been willing enough to accept the prohibition. The difficulty is partly due to the fact that there is no place in the "subject" type of curriculum for a knowledge of how men work in the modern world. So it comes about that a man is held to be badly educated if he cannot spell "accommodation" and name the capital of Czechoslovakia, but his ignorance of what a factory looks like inside may pass without impeachment. The cinema has already played an important part in breaking down the barrier between school and workshop, but its task is far from complete.

DR. W. B. INGLIS

THE DEVELOPMENT OF TELEVISION

SEVEN-AND-A-HALF years ago, John Logie Baird made history by transmitting a televised reproduction of the Derby to a screen in the Metropole Theatre, London, where it was witnessed by a crowded audience. Since then, we have had many suggestions that kinema television was nearly here; yet still it has not arrived.

Many people have asked, what is the cause of this seeming delay? But those technicians who have followed the subject closely are surprised rather at the progress that has actually been made in large-screen reception of images of acceptable quality. Let me try to outline some of the difficulties.

The greatest enemy of television is mathematics. I must be forgiven therefore if, in order to explain some of the difficulties, I indulge in some simple calculations.

The whole basis of television is, like that of kinematography, persistence of vision. The apparent brightness of the picture is dependent upon two factors—the intrinsic brightness of the scanning spot, and the distance this spot has to cover per frame.

The scanning standard is 405 lines, 25 frames per second, and the image ratio is 3 to 4. Taking the conventional square scanning spot as our unit of measurement, there will be 405 units vertically, and 405 by $\frac{4}{3}$ or 540 units horizontally. The total distance to be traversed by the spot will be 405 by 540, or 218,700 times its own width. Thus the intrinsic brightness of the spot must be nearly a quarter of a million times the apparent brightness of the image.

There is our first difficulty in large-screen television. To obtain a picture of the average brightness of a kinema screen we need a spot having an intrinsic brightness greater than that of the sun! Even the comparatively small and dim picture of the commercial kathode-ray tube receiver needs an intrinsic brightness equal to that of a powerful arc lamp.

A second difficulty is that of scanning speed. Assume for sake of convenience a picture 1ft. in width. The scanning spot has to cover this picture width 405 times in 1/25th second. Thus, without allowing for the fly-back time, the spot attains a speed of over 10,000ft. per second, or over 7,000 miles per hour! The speed at which the spot flies back at the end of each line to start the next line is probably twenty or thirty times this speed.

These speeds, of course, vary according to the picture width; consequently to cover a screen of average kinema size—say 20ft.—we reach the enormous speed of 140,000 miles an hour!

This speed, high as it is, presents in itself little difficulty, except for the fact that absolute synchronism must be maintained between transmitter and receiver—at any instant the scanning spots in both instruments must be in absolutely the same part of the same line, otherwise picture distortion will result. This factor has proved the greatest difficulty in mechanical scanning systems, for it appears that the synchronising signals which form part of the picture transmission from Alexandra Palace are not perfectly phased, and vary slightly in timing from frame to frame.

The kathode-ray tube is an instrument absolutely free from measurable inertia, and such variations present no difficulties; but any mechanical system necessarily possesses inertia, and cannot possibly make sudden variations in scanning speed to suit the different timing of the synchronising impulses. Recently, however, the B.B.C. have done much work in improving the accuracy of their signals, and recent demonstrations have shown that a reasonably high standard is maintained.

Here we have three difficulties in the way of big-screen television—light intensity, scanning speed, accuracy of synchronisation. Each of the three companies working on big-screen reception has approached these problems from a different angle.

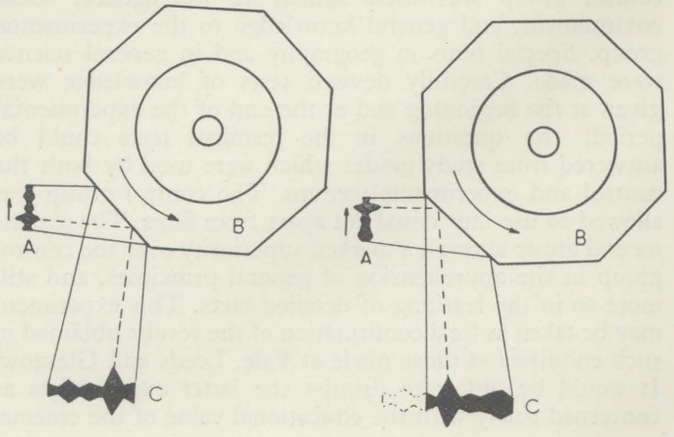
The system most recently demonstrated is that of Baird, which differs from the other two in being purely electronic, and not mechanical. The beginnings of this system I saw a year or two ago in the Baird laboratories in the ill-fated Crystal Palace—a small kathode-ray tube, identical in principle with that used in the commercial receiver, but giving only a small intensely bright picture, which can be projected upon the screen in the same way as a film or lantern-slide.

In the projection tube, the image measures only 3 inches square, and to produce a sufficient intensity of light, a tension of 30,000 volts is needed. This enormous voltage is sufficient to produce a picture brightness of only one-third of a foot-candle on an 8ft. screen—considerably less than that of the kinema, but claimed by Capt. West, of Baird, to be just adequate.

The system offers the obvious advantages of being free from any mechanical moving parts, and of being easily kept in synchronism with the transmitted signals. Another practical advantage is that the projection tube and lens can be placed in front of, instead of behind, the screen (as in other systems)—they could for instance be placed in the ordinary projection room of any kinema.

The Scophony system tackles the problem of light intensity by an extraordinarily clever system. Naturally the details of the picture reach the receiver point by point; other systems content themselves by projecting these picture points one by one upon the screen. In the Scophony system, the points which arrive spaced out in time are actually spaced out in a line, and as many as 150 can be projected simultaneously upon the screen, showing an obvious gain in picture brightness.

The apparatus by which this is performed is very simple, and consists of a piezo-electrical crystal, vibrating at a speed of 10 megacycles per second; its vibrations are modulated



by the picture signals (just as the radio carrier has been so modulated) and are transmitted to a liquid in a small cell.

Now these supersonic vibrations in a liquid consist actually of alternate zones of high and low pressure; the regions of high pressure or increased density tend to retard light waves passing through the liquid. Thus interference effects are set up, varying in accordance with the intensity of modulation, and the picture brightness varies accordingly.

Naturally the speed of movement of the supersonic waves is constant for any given liquid (given constant temperature) and we have thus the effect of our picture points being strung out in the length of the cell, moving continually at constant speed away from the crystal. It is then necessary to use a mirror drum rotating at such a speed that it will immobilise this string of picture points on the screen.

The whole thing is a little difficult to explain on paper, but the sketches may make it clearer. The second sketch shows the position of the waves a minute fraction of a second after the first; *A* represents the string of modulations or scanning points in the liquid, moving in the direction of the arrow, the modulations of light and shade being shown as variations in the thickness of the line; *B* is a polygon of mirrors turning in the direction of the arrow (actually a speed of 30,000 r.p.m. is needed); the image on the screen is shown at *C*.

It will be seen, for instance, that the hump indicated by the dotted ray is moving upwards at *A;* the polygon *B* moves at such a rate that the image at *C* remains stationary (in the second view the dotted lines show the modulations which were included in the first view, but not in the second).

This system permits of the use of an ordinary kinema arc lamp, or in the home model of a mercury-vapour lamp, giving a reasonably good picture brightness. I have seen really excellent demonstrations of this system on a 6ft. screen in the Scophony laboratories, working from a local transmission; reception from the B.B.C. signals has not so far been quite so good, but is nevertheless quite acceptable.

A third system is that of Mihaly-Traub, now being developed in this country. Here an orthodox cell system (a device making use of the properties of an electro-statically stressed liquid to rotate the plane of polarisation of polarised light) is used for modulating the light of an arc. The high speeds needed in the mechanical scanning components are reduced by the use of multiple reflections from stationary mirrors.

Having briefly discussed the three systems showing promise, what conclusions can we draw as to the imminence of kinema television?

There are still many difficulties to be overcome, not all of them technical. But I think it quite possible that we shall this year see the Derby again televised upon a kinema screen, presumably at a London news-theatre. It is almost certain that the B.B.C. will succeed in covering this outstanding event for the home viewer, and, while there are difficulties of copyright to be overcome, I think it quite probable that some relaxation might be made for an experimental demonstration.

Looking at the less immediate future, however, it is doubtful whether such concessions would be allowed as a general thing. The B.B.C. programmes are intended primarily for the home viewer (I have heard it suggested that no kinema patron would pay to see the low standard of entertainment provided!) and permission will not readily be granted for their wider dissemination to public audiences.

Suggestions have been made that a separate service might be inaugurated for kinemas. One has to confess that the kinema exhibitor has not been playing his cards so well in relation to encouraging broadcasts of kinema stage shows, as to deserve to be especially favoured. Nevertheless, there is the distinct possibility.

I do not think it probable that a separate wave-length could be spared for radio transmission, but would put forward the suggestion that, passing most of the West-end theatres, and also running to Birmingham and Leeds, are television cables, which could as easily be used to convey programmes from, as to, Alexandra Palace. Provided the film industry can make suitable arrangements with the authorities, it is quite feasible that these cables might provide the communication channel for the transmission of news events.

I question, however, whether there would be any advantage in reproducing ordinary programme material by television as compared with projection from film; the latter obviously offers the exhibitor a wider choice, and it is, I think, only outstanding performances—such as a Command Variety—or events such as the Derby or a prize-fight, that would justify the installation in kinemas of television equipment.

HOWARD CRICKS, F.R.P.S.

THE PAST YEAR IN TECHNICAL PROGRESS

The year 1937 has not been signalised by any striking technical discovery, nor has it been a year of great prosperity for the rank and file of the trade's technicians.

Yet it would be a mistake to look back on it as a wholly unfruitful year. Gaining wisdom from adversity the technicians are becoming increasingly conscious of the need for rationalising their resources, and we may look in the near future for the maturing of schemes towards this end which have been under discussion throughout the year. In this connection a hearty welcome will be extended in all quarters to the first number of the British Kinematograph Society's journal.

Symptomatic of the desire to clarify all ambiguous positions has been the work of the British Standards Institution in seeking to establish a definite standard of performance and a distinctive marking for safety film, and also in standardising the dimensions of still-film strips.

Colour has progressed steadily without occasioning the necessity for any sweeping changes of projection apparatus, and stereoscopy continues to lurk, where it was glimpsed so long ago, "just round the corner".

Large screen television is the only important cloud which hangs over an otherwise clear horizon.

Among the amateurs colour makes rapid strides in popularity, and the lower cost of 8mm. colour is enhancing the already pronounced trend in favour of 8mm. film for home use. 8mm. projectors and cameras continue to receive much attention from designers, and a motor-driven 8mm. camera has recently been introduced into this country.

H. D. W.

DARTINGTON HALL FILM UNIT

The Dartington Hall Film Unit announce that the following films are now available on 16mms.: *The Senior School, 1937*, running time 22 mins.; *Farmers of the Fjord* (15 mins.); *Norwegian Harvest* (7 mins.).

Nomads will be ready about the end of March.

A full list of films may be obtained from The School, Dartington Hall, Totnes, S. Devon.

Pabst's famous film *Westfront 1918* can be now obtained with English dialogue on 16mm. stock. Details of hiring can be obtained from Fleet Cinemas, 47/48 Berners Street, London, W.1.

SCIENTISTS IN PARIS

The Fifth Scientific Congress described by PATRICIA HUTCHINGS

AT THE Scientific Film Congress in Paris this year, Jean Painlevé and other speakers stressed again the urgent need for more effective organisation and a wider use of the scientific cinema. Centralisation was perhaps the ideal solution, but a group or committee in each country to keep track of activities would ensure greater co-operation and considerably diminish the difficulties of customs, transport and selection.

The first film to be shown comes, appropriately enough, under the catagory of *vulgarisation*, to popularise, to make generally known—enviable word with no hint of contempt about it.

The X-ray, made by UFA under the supervision of Professors Janker and von Redwitz, at Bonn, is a fine sample of what is being done to bridge the gap between the scientist and the everyday world on which the constructive use of his discoveries must ultimately depend.

The opening sequences pay due tribute to Röntgen, and the production of the ray is explained in a series of diagrams worked into the smooth flow of the film. From the first simple apparatus, the spectator is shown the many uses now made of his discovery, in medicine, art and engineering.

Then skillfully the significance of the X-ray is brought home to us by a combination best summed up as Röntgen-sound-film-photography. Animals as the ray sees them, become animated, jelly-like shadows with an intricate and beautifully formed mechanism inside. Musical instruments and the hands that play them, domestic sock knitting and the complicated articulation of a cheque signature, a girl's pretty face and her skeleton counterpart stooping to smell—they were flowers a moment ago—the twisted spikes of unromantic wire! In all these the take it or leave it reality of familiar things is mockingly betrayed.

When the phase of humorous contrast is past, the film shows the means by which we talk; a liquid is being drunk by a ghost not yet bereft of complicated digestive system which functions before our eyes, and a smoker's lungs fill out across the screen like etched ferns.

Once again the film cuts back to straight photography, to a cycle track and an athlete's limbs as they move slowly and deliberately. For the first time, UFA claims, the sound of a human heart is recorded and diagrams show its normal rhythm. This is then compared with the effect of a great muscular effort and dramatically the thud-thud of its beat accompanies the accelerated movement on the screen.

The strength of such a film lies not only in its careful balance and sensational photography but in the far wider implications which are made to underlie an apparently straightforward account. Commentary, I noticed, was well distributed so that important spoken information was given over easily assimilated images and, wherever possible, the screen allowed to tell its own story.

It is just that tendency to overburden the sound track with facts and figures which takes part of the gilt off the gingerbread of an otherwise admirable film called *Boundless Universe*. Astronomy is traced from the geocentric theories of the ancients to the achievements and methods of modern science. Comparisons in size and weight and relative distances are well illustrated by diagrams often amusing in themselves. Actual observatory photographs appear to have been used, and there is also a particularly effective unison of drawing and camera shot, to show, for instance, Scorpio outlined on a calm night sky above the marshes.

As a striking contribution to solar research I may mention here the studies of the prominences made by M. Lyot at the Pic du Midi Observatory in July and September. Shown in slow motion or at normal speed these great, tattered flames mounting and falling back to the sun's surface need neither commentary nor titling.

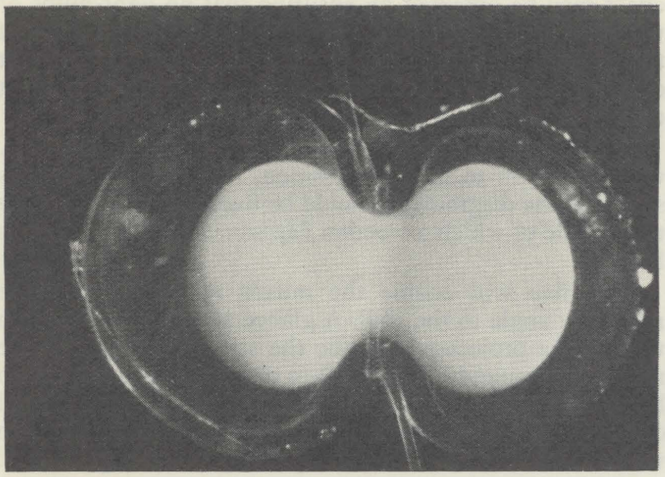
Mystery of Life is a type of film generalisation compiled from more specialised material. Simple cell division of sea urchin—that screen favourite—and the more complex growth of cuttlefish and garfish, lead to Dr. Luther's research on the salamander as we ascend the scale of embryonic development. Finally, there is the evidence supporting Professor Frommolt's claim to have filmed the fertilisation and development of the ova of the domestic rabbit.

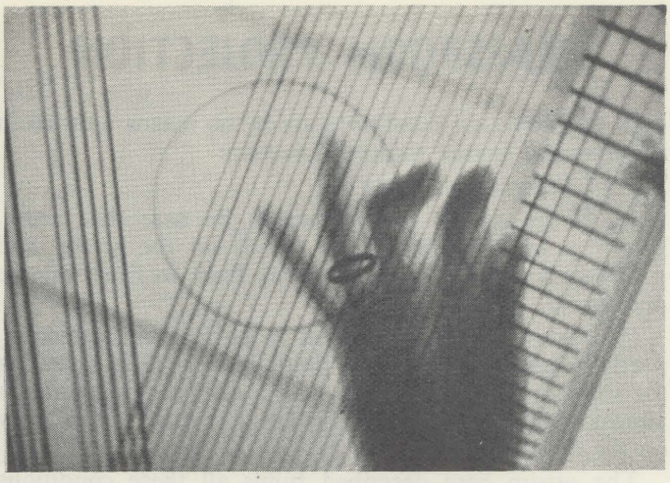
A short film, also directed by Dr. Schulz, gives a lucid account of the formation of genuine and biovulate twins. This is followed by the experiments which are made to split that—to us almost invisible—speck of life which is the fructified ovum. The still on the opposite page shows you how it is done by means of a very fine hair. Like variations on a theme, half grotesque, half beautiful, the strange larva which result are perhaps stages to a definition of life itself.

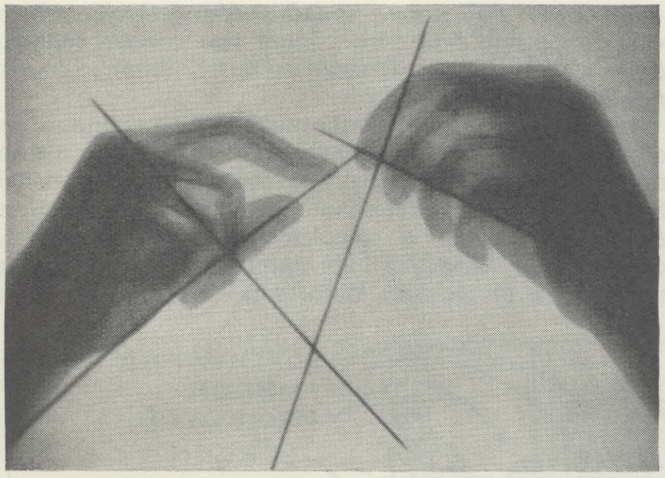
If Dr. Puchstein's observations were not so obviously made on film terms, it would have been possible to compare *André* to a series of extracts from a psychologist's notebook. The selection of older film material and sequences taken both before and after a minor operation, enables us to follow from babyhood a child whose development was affected by his consciousness of a slight deformity—"donkey's ears" as his schoolfellows never forgot to remind him. Of the changes which the film records, the most significant is that of the boy's handwriting. At one time untidy and ill-formed, his neat script and straight margin later sums up his sense of normality and his newly acquired self-confidence.

The Institute of Scientific Cinema produced in 1937 two films shown daily to the public at the Palais de la Decouverte. *On the similarity of lengths and speeds* makes interesting use of trick photography. While Jean Painlevé described *The Fourth Dimension*, also by Sainte-Lague and Dufour, as an analogy "and nothing is more dangerous". The commentary was many times revised, and although the film may serve to imprint more sharply on the mind those terms already familiar, I doubt if it will clarify the Theory as a whole.

[*Photographs on the opposite page by UFA*]







CLASSROOM PROJECTION

THE FOLLOWING conditions are by no means unusual in classroom or lecture theatre projection:

(1) Incomplete darkness.

(2) Necessary for the teacher to be near the screen, partly in order to point out details on the screen and partly because it is easier to speak from in front of the audience.

(3) Necessary for the teacher to be near the projector, partly because he may prefer doing his own slide-changing for stills, and partly because with a cinema projector it is almost impossible to get an assistant to stop instantaneously on the desired picture.

The set-up here described fulfils all these conditions satisfactorily and has the additional advantage of being feasible for 16mm. projection lens of normal focal length (*e.g.* 2 ins.). In Fig. 1 the set-up is shown in plan and Fig. 2 in perspective.

Naturally the details would never be quite alike in any two rooms, but the general outlines can be adapted to almost any room holding up to 100 persons. For larger audiences it would tend to be clumsy owing to the bulk and weight of the mirror which would be required.

A transparent screen, which for normal classroom use might be 1ft. 6ins. to 2ft. wide is set up on a table on the teacher's dais so that it stands (for 16mm. projection with a 2in. lens) some 4 or 5 ft. distant from the back wall of the room. The screen may easily be constructed from a picture frame and a sheet of tracing paper. The projector stands on the table beside the screen.

The blackboard has been introduced into the diagram because it is a quite usual feature in the position indicated and, if present, serves a very useful purpose—the provision of a dark background behind the transparent screen. The depths of the blacks on a transparent screen depends on the absence of extraneous light reaching the eyes of the audience through the screen. In order to achieve this condition completely it would, of course, be necessary to tunnel in the projector beam with opaque material. This, however, makes for a cumbrous set-up, and a sufficiently good effect may be obtained by ensuring that no light-bulbs or windows show through the screen, and that such areas of the wall as show are of low brightness. If any relevant part of the wall is light in colour it may be desirable to paint it dark or cover it with black cloth or brown paper.

The mirror requires to be about 1ft. high and 1ft. 6ins. wide. In order to fix it in position, if it is to be hung as shown in the diagrams, it should be fixed to a wood backing to one side of which a wooden flap some 3 or 4 ins. wide is hinged.

This flap will enable the mirror to be hung at the necessary angle to the wall. A glance at Fig. 1 will explain why, if the projector is beside the screen, one side of the mirror must stand off the wall in order that the projection beam may strike the screen from behind in a true central direction. Alternatively the mirror may be stood on a stand, in which case adjustment for the required position is quite easy.

H. D. W.

NEW APPARATUS

Messrs. Bell & Howell announce a new model of their well-known "138" 16mm. sound-on-film projector, which will incorporate both still picture and reverse running devices. It will also be obtainable with a "blimp" to ensure noiseless running, if desired.

It should certainly satisfy the most exacting requirements of users for whom noiseless running is an essential, and on this account will be especially welcome in the educational field. The newest Filmosound is the 130-D 1,000-watt Auditorium model. A completely redesigned amplifier, capable of an unusually high output, is the outstanding new feature of the 130. With twin speakers the output is as high as 50 watts, but when only one speaker is used, a switch on the amplifier limits the maximum output to 30 watts, so that the single speaker cannot be overloaded. The Filmosound 130-D is available in four combinations, one or two projectors with amplifier, and one or two speakers. When two projectors are used, there is no interruption in long programmes, for as one machine is switched off at the end of a reel, the other is automatically started. Twin speakers mean not only improved sound distribution in large auditoriums, but they also provide an efficient system capable of handling the unusually high output of the new amplifier.

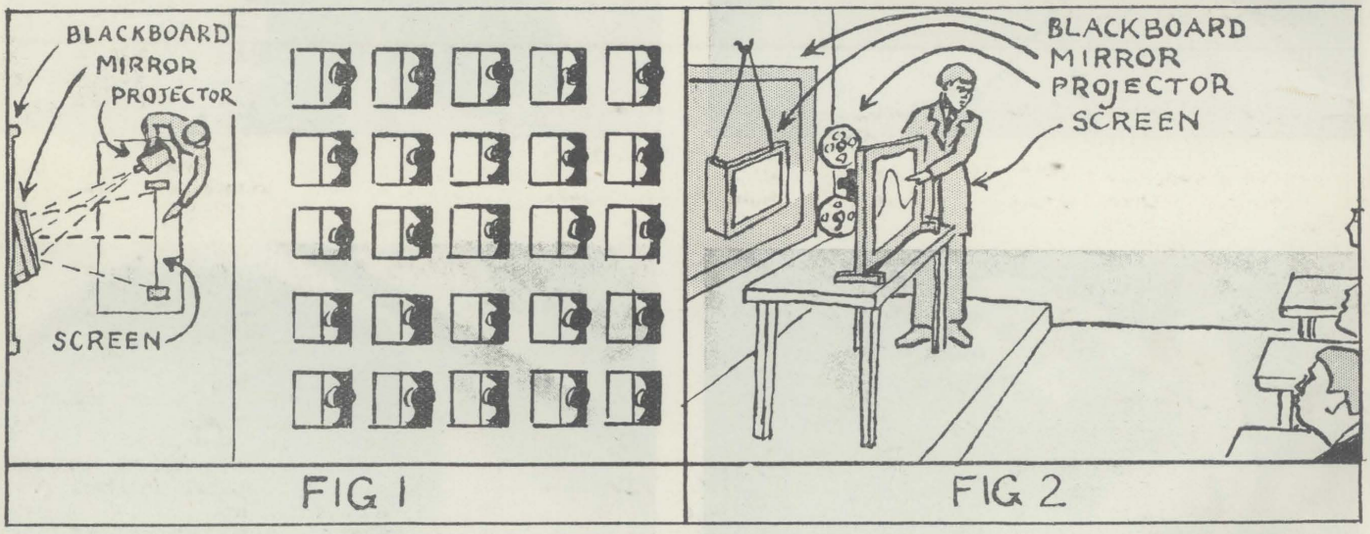


FIG 1 FIG 2

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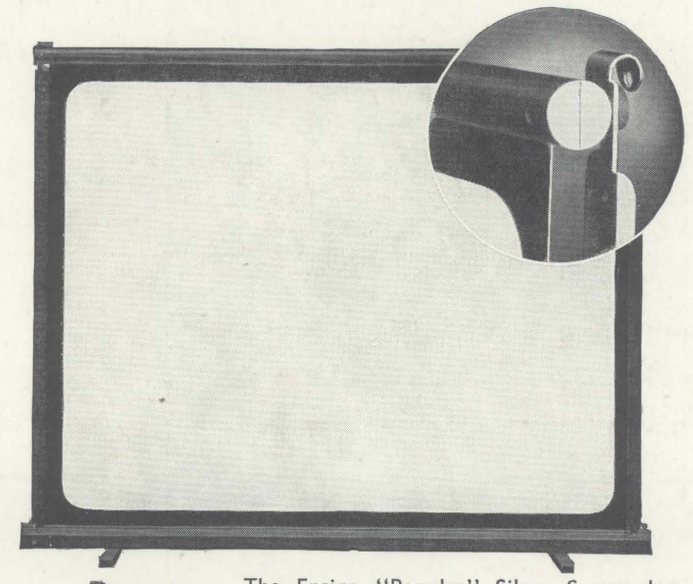

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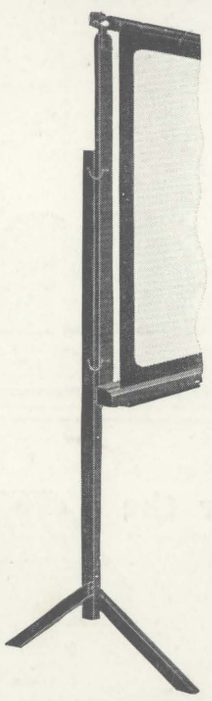

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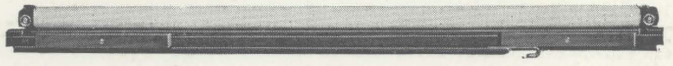

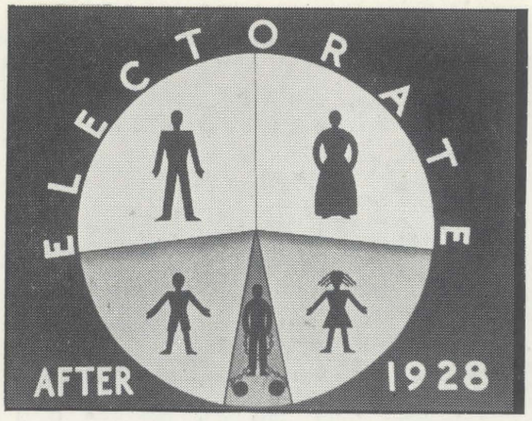

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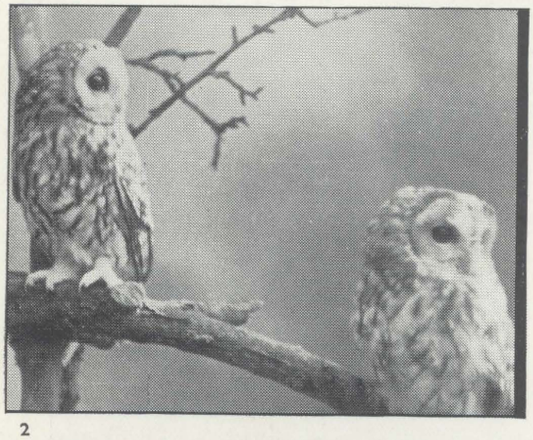

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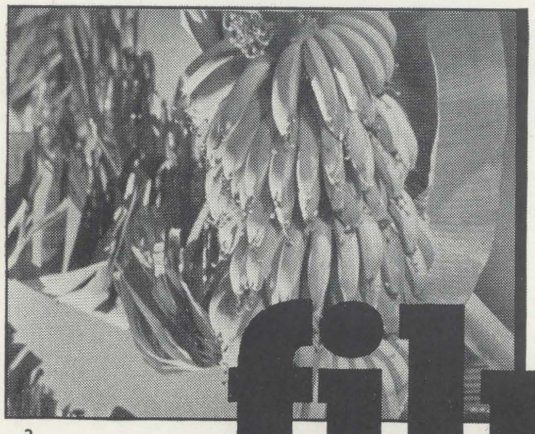

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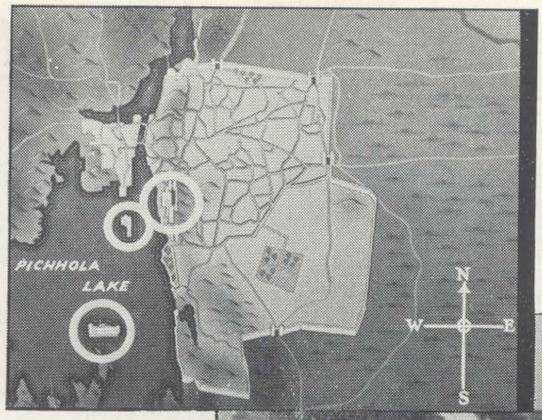

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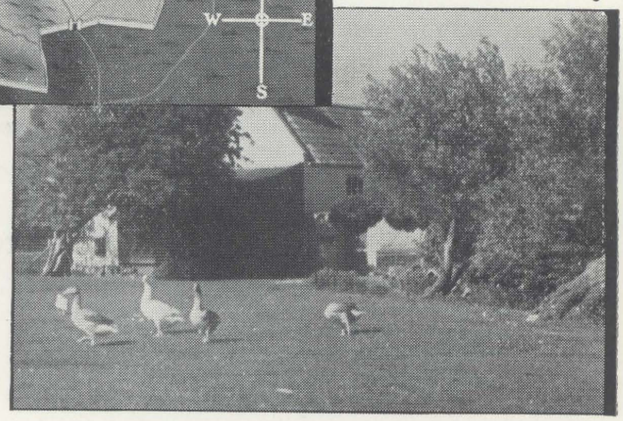

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